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President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) (Republic of Korea)
later: Mr. Khiari (Vice-President) (Tunisia)

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Annual ministerial review: Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take
(continued)

National voluntary presentations: Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines and Zambia
(E/2015/60, E/2015/61, E/2015/62 and E/2015/63)

1. **The President** said that national voluntary presentations had been intrinsic to the Council's high-level segment, demonstrating the Council's value as a platform for engaging the global community in an exchange of critical lessons on the implementation of the agenda to achieve internationally agreed development goals. Since 2007, over 60 countries had shared their experiences and insights in the review process, some on more than one occasion.
2. The presentations offered a platform where national implementation could connect with international policymaking with regard to that agenda. They also offered an opportunity to ensure strong integration of the normative and operational areas of development in the work of the United Nations development system. Each year, volunteering countries presented policies and initiatives that merited scaling up or replication. The presentations thus offered insights and lessons learned for development, especially in the context of a new, more comprehensive and universal development agenda.
3. The participating countries in 2015 — Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines and Zambia — would offer insights on their development progress and the obstacles remaining. They would also provide guidance regarding the transition to the new global agenda, which would constitute a more integrated and ambitious framework than the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The key to the effectiveness of the national presentations was dialogue and feedback.
4. He invited Mr. Shank, Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus, to act as moderator for the national voluntary presentations.
5. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus), moderator, said that during the transition to the

sustainable development goals, it was important to start considering agriculture, water management, energy, economic growth, industrialization, consumption, use of oceans, use of terrestrial ecosystems, and forest management within an inclusive sustainable development framework. Governments and countries were already working fast and furiously towards the sustainable development goals.

6. Climate change was affecting all countries, and sustainable development was the necessary answer to it. Unless both the problem of climate change and the solution of sustainable development were communicated to constituencies, voters and populations alike, the international community would remain less than optimally effective in addressing them. He encouraged increasing synergy, shared resources and improved efficiency for the various United Nations bodies working on both climate change and sustainable development. The 17 sustainable development goals clearly overlapped with the climate change agenda and their integration with the sustainable development agenda must become the new standard.
7. He hoped that the Council would remain a hub for climate change conversations and would encourage preventive sustainable development solutions, to ensure that climate conflict did not cause food, water and resource security issues leading to violence.
8. The national voluntary presentation by Kyrgyzstan would be reviewed by Turkey and the Russian Federation; the presentation by Mongolia would be reviewed by Switzerland, Japan and Germany; the presentation by the Philippines would be reviewed by the United States, Malaysia and Spain; and the presentation by Zambia would be reviewed by the United States and Sweden.

Presentation by Kyrgyzstan

9. **Ms. Niyazalieva** (Kyrgyzstan), drawing attention to her country's report on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/2015/62), said that although Kyrgyzstan had made significant progress in achieving some of the MDGs, it still faced many problems. The work undertaken to prepare the national voluntary presentation, as well as the Council's recommendation, would pave the way to solving those problems and defining an effective way

to transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals.

10. Kyrgyzstan had made significant progress with regard to MDG 1, having reached its extreme poverty reduction target in 2008. However, due to the global financial crisis in 2009 and the deterioration of the socioeconomic situation following the political events of 2010 in Kyrgyzstan, that achievement had proved difficult to maintain. Nonetheless, the Government had adopted comprehensive stabilizing measures, strengthened social support for the poorer segments of the population, and succeeded in reducing extreme poverty to 2.8 per cent, four times lower than the MDG target, by the end of 2013.

11. Overall, the environmental situation in the country was relatively favourable. Most of the targets for MDG 7 had been achieved, including those regarding greenhouse gas emissions, consumption of ozone-depleting substances and carbon dioxide emissions. In 2012, Kyrgyzstan had ranked 101st on the Environmental Performance Index, ahead of all the other Central Asian republics. Since 2005, all of the country's national policy papers had taken environmental issues into account as a key development priority.

12. The country had managed to retain high levels of literacy, with yearly increases in the number of children receiving basic general education. By the end of 2014, 98.4 per cent of children attended school. Positive trends had also been witnessed in relation to child mortality, especially the under-five mortality rate, which had dropped dramatically between 1997 and 2014. Progress had also been seen in a few of the gender equality indicators, such as the ratio of women in tertiary education. However, the issues of maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, drug use, low-quality drinking water and access to sanitation and an increase in the number of HIV and drug-resistant tuberculosis infections remained.

13. Out of the 37 MDG targets officially adopted, Kyrgyzstan had fully achieved six and made positive progress on another seven. The main reasons for its slow progress included the lengthy process of creating an institutional framework for the adoption of the MDGs; the lack of an inter-sectoral approach, where budgeting was linked to the goals; and weak financing, institutional support and strategic planning frameworks.

14. Integrating sustainable development issues into national policy instruments required improved strategic planning. To that end, the country had more than 50 sectoral programmes, and sustainable development was the top priority of both the National Sustainable Development Strategy for 2013-2017 and the Programme for Transition to Sustainable Development 2013-2017. In addition, there were cooperation mechanisms at various levels, including the National Council for Sustainable Development, headed by the President, and the MDG Coordinating Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Social Affairs. Those mechanisms would be adapted in order to face the challenges of the sustainable development goals.

15. There were, however certain potential constraints to the transition process: inadequate communication between cross-sectoral forums at the national, sectoral and agency levels; insufficient attention to some targets; issues with the legislation related to strategic planning; low capacity of the public institutions responsible for strategic issues; and the need to strengthen the relevant national statistical bodies. Her Government was, however, working to adapt the global goals to local conditions in Kyrgyzstan, a mountainous and landlocked country with limited resources. It would adapt goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, to ensure the sustainable use of the country's lakes and resources and preserve its mountainous ecosystems.

16. The MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda were an intrinsic part of the political course of Kyrgyzstan, which was focused on sustainable development. The mechanisms for responsibility and accountability at the global and regional levels must be closely coordinated with the national components of development in each country.

17. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) said that it was important that Kyrgyzstan had identified inadequate communication between cross-sectoral forums at the national, sectoral and agency levels as among the most important constraints to its transition to the sustainable development goals. The need for interagency coordination was of the essence and those goals must be integrated into strategy documents at all levels and taken up by all actors and stakeholders for the transition to succeed. He hoped that ministers would begin to be appointed with the

words "sustainable development" in their titles, thus mainstreaming the use of the concept.

18. **Mr. Ele** (Observer for Turkey), reviewer, said that Turkey noted with appreciation the intensive efforts of the Kyrgyz authorities in building and strengthening the democratic State, ensuring sustainable development, overcoming the legacy of the past, and preventing emerging risks and challenges. As national strategic documents were crucial for sustainable development, Turkey was pleased that the principles of sustainable development had been integrated into the National Sustainable Development Strategy for 2013-2017 and the Programme for Transition to Sustainable Development 2013-2017.

19. Turkey also commended the Kyrgyz authorities for priming the country for an effective transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals and for enabling the country to participate in pilot programmes in a number of areas related to the post-2015 development agenda. The participation of national and regional institutions, as well as the aligning of strategic documents with the post-2015 agenda, would expedite the transition process. Turkey recognized that Kyrgyzstan had already achieved, and in fact surpassed, the target indicator level on extreme poverty, despite its domestic difficulties. Turkey likewise expected progress towards the achievement of the other two targets under MDG 1 regarding nutrition, and was encouraged to see that the environmental dimension was considerably favourable and that many indicators under MDG 7 had been achieved.

20. Despite the significant progress with regard to MDG 1 and 7, and a general positive trend, there was still room for more progress regarding the other MDGs. As mentioned in the national report, inadequate maternal health care and high maternal and child mortality were major concerns for Kyrgyzstan. The increased prevalence of HIV infection and the morbidity rate for other communicable diseases also posed challenges.

21. Turkey encouraged the Government of Kyrgyzstan to develop viable and comprehensive solutions to those challenges. Establishing a coordinating committee to eliminate red tape and adopting a cross-sectoral approach were options to consider. Turkey and the Kyrgyz Republic had a robust cooperative relationship in the health sector, having

signed an agreement on cooperation in health and medical sciences in 2014.

22. Turkey believed that strengthening the political, social and economic climate of Kyrgyzstan was necessary for regional stability and security. Therefore, it provided economic and technical assistance to support that country in the areas of democracy, sustainable economy, education, security, culture, justice and human rights. In addition, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency had implemented many projects in various fields in order to assist Kyrgyzstan in its sustainable development efforts. As part of its continuous commitment to development assistance, the Agency continued to support infrastructure projects such as hospitals and schools in Kyrgyzstan.

23. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation), reviewer, said that despite difficulties, Kyrgyzstan had achieved progress in five out of the seven MDGs, which was a good result. His delegation especially noted the country's achievements in decreasing extreme poverty, ensuring environmental sustainability, decreasing child and infant mortality, lowering rates of malaria infection, increasing access to education and promoting gender equality. Thanks to sensible and strategic policies, those goals had become attainable for the first time. It was important to fully integrate the MDGs into the development process and to view them as a blueprint for moving the country forward in keeping with its national priorities.

24. The main challenges facing Kyrgyzstan in the post-2015 development context were the need to eliminate discrepancies in achievements between the country's different regions, to close social gaps and to overcome negative trends in maternal mortality. He sought more information about the measures that the Kyrgyz Government would adopt in that regard, how civil society and the Government would work together to solve those issues, and what donors should expect.

25. For its part, the Russian Federation would continue to support the sustainable development of Kyrgyzstan through bilateral efforts and within the multilateral context, in accordance with its existing agreements regarding economic and technical cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union. It had, for example, allocated \$200 million to assisting Kyrgyzstan with sustainable development from 2015 to 2017. In March 2015, work had begun on the

Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund, with an initial capital of \$500 million. Russian assistance to the country was also provided on a multilateral basis through targeted donations to the United Nations system, humanitarian cooperation and regular food donations. In April 2014, the Russian Federation had sent 2,000 tonnes of wheat flour to Kyrgyzstan, and in 2015, it had made \$22 million in donations to United Nations funding for school meals in the country. In addition, it had made a one-time contribution to many countries, including Kyrgyzstan, for foodstuffs, totalling \$3 million.

26. In 2013, the Russian Federation had led a project called "access to quality education" in the Kyrgyz Republic to create Russian-language educational materials through a targeted contribution of \$500,000 to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). More than 100,000 Russian-language texts had been printed, as well as 10,000 methodological textbooks for instructors. As a result, literacy in both languages had improved.

27. The Russian Federation had also contributed \$2.5 million to UNICEF for improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene. It had provided \$3.5 million to the United Nations Development Programme for the economic development of Kyrgyzstan. In addition, a cooperation project for sanitary control had been implemented with a renewable yearly donation of \$100,000. Finally, the Russian Federation was improving projects to create employment through a \$2 million voluntary contribution to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and was prepared to continue aiding Kyrgyzstan in many other areas.

28. **Ms. Niyazalieva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that Kyrgyzstan had developed a comprehensive national programme to achieve the MDGs and was very grateful to all countries that had provided support, especially the Russian Federation. Her Government had adopted a disaster risk reduction plan which required it to adapt its policies to the new economic realities it faced. The plan laid out measures for the adoption of laws to promote transparency and to protect businesses, State bodies, civil society organizations and all democratic processes in the country.

29. However, the inability to achieve the MDGs regarding health care was a cause for concern. The country was consequently developing a health-care plan which it hoped would help to lower maternal

mortality rates and improve the overall state of health care in the country. With regard to the future and the sustainable development goals, the Government intended to use donor assistance and resources from abroad more effectively, as outlined in its national sustainable development programme.

30. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) said that, unlike the MDGs, the sustainable development goals contained common language that would make it easier to monitor the effectiveness of such programmes. For example, the goals sought to determine whether it was socially sustainable or even possible for someone living on a minimum wage or on less than \$1 or \$2 a day to pursue everything he or she needed to do, in the areas of health, education, economic mobility, financial markets and environmental sustainability. It was important to use the three pillars of sustainable development in common conversation, and to hold them up as metrics for voters and the public to use, thus mainstreaming them into everyday language.

Presentation by Mongolia

31. **Mr. Khurelbaatar** (Observer for Mongolia), drawing attention to his country's report on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/2015/61), said that in recent decades his country had been able to make the transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. It had developed a sustainable development action programme for the twenty-first century to promote environmental protection and the efficient use of natural resources. However, implementation of the programme had been slow owing to factors such as the Asian economic crisis and his country's weak policy coordination system. Furthermore, agreements with international banks and financial institutions during the transition period had been focused on maintaining macroeconomic stability, liberalizing the economy and reducing the budget deficit rather than on development priorities and social, infrastructure and environmental needs.

32. The MDGs had played a critical role in the development of medium- and long-term national development policies and the creation of the related implementation mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation systems. His Government had been rolling out its MDG-based Comprehensive National Development Strategy for 2008-2021, and its Green

Development Policy, adopted in 2014, with a view to creating an enabling environment for the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

33. Mongolia had expanded and strengthened its development cooperation with international organizations, with positive results. Grants and concessional loans had been used to facilitate the achievement of the MDGs and implementation of the Comprehensive National Development Strategy. His country had experienced strong economic growth over the past 14 years, with the average annual gross domestic product (GDP) increasing from 5.6 per cent in 2000-2005 to 6.7 per cent in 2005-2010 and 10.7 per cent in 2010-2014. As a result, Mongolia was now considered a lower-middle-income country rather than a low-income country. As of 2014, its gross national income per capita was \$4,070.

34. His country had fully achieved MDGs 4 and 5, and had achieved its target on the development of new information communications technology under MDG 8. Progress had been made on gender equality, including women's participation in political decision-making, and the national poverty rate had been reduced from 36.3 per cent in 1995 to 21.6 per cent in 2014. Mongolia had also set a goal of strengthening human rights and fostering democratic governance, as it considered those elements to be essential conditions for the achievement of all of the other MDGs. Consequently, the Government had taken concrete action to promote transparency, encourage participation and combat corruption, with the result that Mongolia ranked 80th in the 2014 Corruption Perception Index, compared with 120th in 2011.

35. However, some of the MDGs had not been fully achieved, including the goals to reduce youth unemployment, and the prevalence of tuberculosis, and to protect the environment, especially with regard to reducing air pollution in urban areas, including in Ulaanbaatar.

36. Looking ahead, there was an urgent need to create an integrated development policy system that would enable realistic development policy planning based on current methodologies and trends; improve the legal framework governing sustainable development; and build the capacities of those responsible for policy planning. Mongolia had great potential to contribute to global sustainable development by producing and exporting high-quality

organic food products, developing an ecotourism industry and generating solar and wind energy for export to Asian markets. Increased integration of States in the region and infrastructure development in Asia would likely create a favourable environment for the development of Mongolia.

37. While implementation of the sustainable development goals presented great opportunities, his country was also facing many challenges. It would be vital for it to diversify its economy, which had become more dependent on copper and coking coal exports and was, as a result, more vulnerable to price fluctuations in international markets and demand from a small number of States. Industrialization, which was another priority for his Government, was hindered by limited opportunities for the adoption of innovative and advanced technologies. Furthermore, the general population had little understanding or awareness of sustainable development.

38. The Government's priorities would include developing strategies to achieve essential social development targets, such as reducing inequality and increasing the size of the middle class. The national Green Development Policy had been designed to promote environmentally friendly, effective and inclusive growth and would play a key role in the achievement of the sustainable development goals, such as eradicating poverty, providing water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, reducing the negative impact of climate change and environmental pollution, and creating stable employment through inclusive and participatory economic growth. Ensuring coherence between the sustainable development goals, the Green Development Policy and national long-term development policies would generate environmental, social and economic benefits, help to create green jobs in every sector and reduce poverty and unemployment.

39. Development cooperation should aim to improve governance and the capacity of public institutions, ensure consistent implementation of policies, improve policy cohesion and coordination, and ensure optimal coordination across the three pillars of sustainable development. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems for government initiatives would make a significant contribution to good governance and the achievement of the sustainable development goals. With regard to specific proposals for cooperation, his country hoped to make use of international financing mechanisms, including the Green Climate Fund.

40. His Government called for international mobilization and collective action and cooperation, in the belief that joint efforts were indispensable to promote sustainable development and establish a healthy and secure society for the next generation.

41. **Mr. Wennubst** (Switzerland), reviewer, said that more than a decade after the three natural disasters that had ruined the pastoral system in Mongolia, the Government had been able to improve the country's resilience and the well-being of its citizens. Falling commodity prices and the unattractiveness of the pastoral livelihood to young people were challenges, however.

42. In an effort to achieve the MDGs, the Government had established national development targets and indicators, and increased to 50 per cent the proportion of the State budget allocated to education, social welfare and poverty reduction. Although the adoption in 2008 of the MDG-based Comprehensive National Development Strategy had resulted in better development planning, progress towards the Goals and the reduction of poverty, the Government should establish institutions able to link long-term goals to medium- and short-term policies.

43. His delegation welcomed the early achievement of some of the MDGs, the consolidation of democratic institutions and the strengthening of political rights. The Mongolian Government should set achievable targets for that it had set for itself, namely to strengthen human rights and foster democratic governance, and should increase women's participation in politics and decision-making. The target related to the development of trade and the financial system, contained in Goal 8, was essential to the post-2015 development agenda. The country's dependence on mining revenues made it vulnerable to external fluctuations and its jeopardized sustainable development.

44. Mongolia must translate its rapid economic growth into social development. Public revenues should be used to create jobs and raise incomes among vulnerable groups. His Government welcomed the Mongolian Government's approach to the transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals, and was reviewing its own national sustainable development strategy to align it with the post-2015 development agenda. It looked forward to sharing

experiences of national implementation of the MDG agenda with Mongolia and other countries.

45. **Mr. Nakane** (Japan), reviewer, said that the ability of Mongolia to meet the challenges of the transition to a market economy and those of natural disasters and the Asian financial crisis was an example to other countries. It was encouraging to see that the Government had produced long-, medium- and short-term national development policies, taking into account the discussions on international development since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, and the promotion, since democratization in 1990, of structural reforms intended to produce a market economy.

46. His delegation welcomed the efforts made by Mongolia to become a lower-middle-income country and to achieve the MDGs related to child mortality, maternal health and HIV/AIDS, and the progress towards gender equality. The widening gap between rich and poor meant, however, that industry needed to be diversified, the distribution of resources reviewed, social services improved and youth employment promoted. Disparities between the capital and other areas of the country should be addressed.

47. The high-quality development pursued by Mongolia would be the basis for sustainable development by 2030. The Naryn-Guur elevated bridge in Ulaanbaatar had been built using advanced technologies that would prevent it from collapsing in the event of an earthquake. Foreign construction technologies were presented to students and engineers through seminars and on-site tours.

48. The mobilization of private capital and foreign direct investment in Mongolia, in addition to government funding and official development assistance, was essential for the implementation of the future development agenda, given the recent diversification of development resources and actors. Japan and Mongolia had been and would continue working in close collaboration to advance their strategic partnership. Japan was the largest donor to Mongolia, and in February 2015, the two countries had signed an economic partnership agreement, the first such agreement ever signed by Mongolia. Mongolia had also established its first joint crediting mechanism for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions with Japan.

49. Japan attached a high priority in its official development assistance to strengthening urban functionality in Ulaanbaatar. He requested further information on how the Government of Mongolia planned to address the concentration of the population in that city; and on the causes of the high rate of inflation in the country and how the Government planned to address them.

50. The middle class must be strengthened and sustainable industrialization promoted in order to eradicate poverty. It would be useful to know what the Government was doing to encourage small and medium-sized enterprises, which were essential to inclusive economic growth. Given that air pollution and water contamination were grave problems in Ulaanbaatar, he asked what the Government had done to ensure economic development while conserving the environment.

51. **Mr. Gies** (Germany), reviewer, said that Mongolia had taken crucial steps in the transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals. It had undergone fundamental political and social changes, with rapid and peaceful democratic and market development and the incorporation into national policies of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992.

52. The links between the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development must be taken into account, particularly in the countryside, where many Mongolians depended on fragile ecosystems. The vulnerability of livestock to natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change and biodiversity loss, was a significant cause of poverty. Mongolia, where annual mean temperatures had increased by 2.1°C between 1940 and 2007, was one of the countries most affected by climate change. Rural Mongolians often migrated to cities in search of income, with the result that half of the population lived in the capital, where unplanned urban growth was a problem. Revenue from the country's mineral resources must benefit everyone, and the negative effects of mining on the environment must be avoided.

53. Despite economic, environmental and fiscal constraints, Mongolia had adapted the MDGs through national policies and institutional reforms, showing the importance of strengthened capacities and effective institutions to sustainable development. The Goals

were embedded in national policies in the form of development benchmarks. Development goals should be adapted to national circumstances and their implementation should be given a high priority to help in development planning, fiscal policy, and monitoring and evaluation.

54. Mongolia had taken steps to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the MDG agenda, including by submitting five national progress reports. His delegation welcomed the inclusion of the local and national levels in the review mechanism and the planned strengthening of monitoring and evaluation in 2015. Mongolia should be at the forefront of monitoring progress towards the sustainable development goals, share its experiences with other countries and build on the data and statistical capacities gained through such initiatives as the pilot project to support the National Poverty and Millennium Development Goals Monitoring and Assessment System. A multi-stakeholder approach to reviewing the sustainable development goals should be taken.

55. His delegation welcomed the Mongolian Government's intention to ensure a successful transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals through a holistic approach and the stringent interlinking of social and economic development with environmental sustainability; the integration of the sustainable development goals into relevant policies; institutional stability; the involvement of the private sector, civil society and academia; the improvement of policy coherence through better links between development planning, fiscal policy, monitoring, and data and statistics; and the adaptation of policies to the social, economic and ecological dimensions of sustainability. Mongolia had developed initial ideas for reflecting the sustainable development goals in its development strategies.

56. **Mr. Khurelbaatar** (Observer for Mongolia), said that the Mongolian economy was heavily dependent on mining, which accounted for 90 per cent of export revenue and 50 per cent of budget revenue. The 50 per cent decrease in mineral prices in the previous three years had therefore resulted in a significant fall in export and fiscal revenues. The external environment was the greatest obstacle to the achievement of the MDGs. Diversification would render the economy more resilient to such shocks, and his Government

would promote tourism and organic foods to reduce the effects of fluctuations in mineral prices.

57. The experience of the MDGs had helped Mongolia plan its pursuit of the sustainable development goals. His Government had submitted to parliament a national planning law, to be approved by the end of 2015, clarifying institutional roles and responsibilities and enabling inclusive planning with the participation of government institutions, civil society, citizens and the media, in pursuit of the sustainable development goals. Since the transition to a market economy in 1990, his Government had made every effort to foster democracy, human rights and gender equality, although further improvement was possible.

58. Pollution was the largest problem for the population of Ulaanbaatar, half of whom lived in traditional tents heated by coal stoves. His Government had provided more environmentally friendly coal stoves and invested in infrastructure to eliminate such pollution within 10 years. The 2015 inflation target was 9 per cent, down from 14 per cent in 2014. One of the main causes of inflation in the country was that more than half of the goods consumed were imported, and exchange rate risks resulting from currency depreciation meant that the price of such goods had risen. The medium-term inflation target was 7 per cent.

59. His Government was ready to exchange experiences of implementing the MDG agenda with other countries. Such sharing was important for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. State support for the mining industry over the previous 10 years had resulted in environmental damage, which had affected rural people in particular. In an effort to achieve the sustainable development goals, his Government would promote less environmentally harmful mining and restrict further expansion of the sector, focusing instead on tourism and ecologically friendly products.

60. *Mr. Khiari (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the chair.*

Presentation by the Philippines

61. **Mr. Balisacan** (Observer for the Philippines), drawing attention to his country's report on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/2015/60), said that good governance was crucial to

sustainable development and it was therefore significant that much of the implementation period for the MDG agenda had coincided with a period of political uncertainty in the Philippines. Under former President Joseph Estrada, the Government had given priority to poverty reduction but its anti-poverty programme had been discontinued when his presidential term had been cut short. Under his successor, President Arroyo, national development plans had again focused on achieving prosperity for as many people as possible and reducing poverty, and national targets for 2010 had been set alongside the targets set for 2015 as part of the MDGs. In addition, directives had been issued on the institutional arrangements for the implementation and oversight of the MDG agenda. However, frequent challenges to the legitimacy of the Government had adversely affected fiscal allocations for the public goods and social services required to achieve the MDGs.

62. In 2010, under President Benigno Aquino III, the Government had established a national development plan focused on implementing governance reforms, promoting inclusive growth and generating quality employment. The Cabinet had been organized into thematic clusters to allow for better coordination of policies, programmes and projects relating to social development and the MDGs. As a result of governance and policy reforms in recent years, the Philippines had become one of the fastest-growing emerging economies in Asia and the world. However, the country's MDG accomplishments were mixed. While improvements had been noted for certain development indicators, performance for other indicators had been moderate if not weak. The country had been successful in areas in which the targets clearly indicated the interventions needed and where accountability had been clearly established. For other targets, progress could not be ascertained owing to a lack of updated data.

63. In 2003, the country had been on track to meet the target of reducing poverty by at least 0.72 percentage points per year under MDG 1, as poverty had been reduced from 34.4 per cent in 1991 to 24.9 per cent in 2003, only to worsen in 2009. Over the previous five years, robust economic growth and improved fiscal space meant that the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger had gained traction again and the Government was now monitoring poverty annually instead of every three

years. Using first-semester data, the incidence of poverty had increased marginally in 2014 compared to 2013, which demonstrated the need for a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy.

64. The Government was investing heavily in social services and, since 2008, had been transferring modest amounts of money to poor households under its conditional cash transfer programme, which now covered one fifth of the population and had been enhanced to include livelihood and community empowerment programmes. The increase in poverty in 2014 was partly the result of disasters in 2013 and food price inflation in the first half of 2014, which highlighted the need to introduce measures to reduce vulnerability.

65. On lessons learned, the Government was now aware that attainment of the MDGs required a sustained and consistent commitment among all stakeholders. In addition, the commitment of the political leadership must resonate across all levels of the bureaucracy and must be sustained from one administration to another, given that implementation of the sustainable development goals agenda would span four administrations in the Philippines.

66. For strategies to be effective, the implementation plan should include a financing component to ensure that there was uninterrupted growth over a reasonable length of time, coupled with significant investments in health, education and social protection to empower the poor. Between 2000 and 2003, public spending on social services had fallen each year and it was only over the previous four years that spending had increased significantly. The implementation plan should also include programmes to build resilience against natural and man-made disasters and economic shocks; those should target the poor in particular, given that they typically lived in areas most prone to natural disasters. Development programmes must include strategies to address the vulnerabilities of communities and their residents, and should incorporate disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation measures and risk transfer or insurance mechanisms.

67. There should be a clear assignment of responsibilities consistent with the governance structure. A 2003 directive had given some national government agencies responsibility for addressing specific MDG targets, but the local government code of 1991 had already devolved the responsibility for

providing basic services from those national government agencies to autonomous local government units. As a result, some of the national agencies assigned had lacked the direct mandate to deliver the needed services and local government units had in turn lacked the capacity to plan and implement programmes to meet the Goals.

68. The Philippines remained committed to achieving the MDGs even beyond 2015 and had taken corrective measures to address the shortcomings noted. In addition, the Government was working to create a sustainable development framework with economic, social and environmental dimensions. To mobilize funds to promote the development goals, the Government's strategy was focused on achieving sustained economic growth, in order to create the necessary fiscal space. To that end, the Government was drawing on funds from official development assistance and grants to implement two poverty reduction programmes, and was establishing public-private partnerships in infrastructure development in order to free up resources for human and social development.

69. Given the country's intrinsic vulnerabilities, building resilience was also a priority; in that connection, the Government had invested heavily in technology and infrastructure to improve its disaster risk reduction and mitigation systems. It was also considering disaster risk financing to ensure funding for reconstruction in cases of catastrophe without having to compromise fiscal sustainability. That financing option could be made more affordable with greater global cooperation to improve the risk portfolio.

70. With the large numbers of its nationals working and living abroad, the Philippines was also vulnerable to external shocks. The Government therefore promoted national, bipartite and multilateral arrangements to address that concern. Lastly, the country needed an appropriate data monitoring system to support the accountability mechanism and allow for tracking of development targets. The system should provide timely information in line with assigned responsibilities. However, creating such a system would require huge financial resources and expertise. The Government therefore called on the international community and multilateral agencies to provide financial contributions to that end.

71. **Mr. Erdman** (United States of America), reviewer, said that many of the lessons learned by the Philippines could be applied to other countries. His delegation welcomed the insights on matching political commitment with financing, the need for a sustained commitment from all stakeholders and the importance of good governance with clear responsibilities and accountability mechanisms. The Philippines had made encouraging progress towards achieving the MDGs by reducing poverty and child mortality, improving maternal health and working to overcome HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. In addition, the country had been most successful in addressing commitments involving a specific policy action or clearly established accountability, such as the targets under MDG 7 concerning environmental sustainability.
72. Noting the importance of economic growth and fiscal space and the mobilization of both public and private resources in financing social programmes, he requested further information on the Government's plans to ensure that financing and political commitments were correlated, and on the experience of the Philippines with public-private partnerships. He also wondered what the Government was doing to strengthen resilience, minimize the impact of man-made and natural disasters and prevent those events from undermining poverty reduction efforts.
73. It was encouraging that a high level of political support had been given to the attainment of the MDGs and that the Government of the Philippines had learned key lessons relating to the clear assignment of responsibilities consistent with the governance structure. His delegation requested further information on the lessons learned and the failures, including the measures taken to correct them, given that countries could learn as much from their failures as from their successes. Lastly, it requested further information on the use of data in steering policymakers.
74. **Mr. Raja Zaib Shah** (Observer for Malaysia), reviewer, said that the Government of the Philippines had made commendable efforts to place the MDGs at the centre of policy discussions in regular Cabinet-level meetings, with explicit support from the legislative branch. However, the occurrence of natural disasters had affected the realization of the MDGs, and such disasters tended to move non-poor families into poverty and poor families into greater poverty. It was therefore critical that investment should be channelled into building resilience and in disaster preparedness.
75. Having faced its own operational and political challenges, Malaysia recognized that the Government of the Philippines continued to face challenges in implementing the MDGs. Good governance was crucial to ensure the success of the development agenda. His delegation sought further information on the financing strategy that the Philippines planned to adopt to achieve the MDGs, given its limited resources. It also wondered what role the private sector was expected to play in achieving those Goals. Lastly, as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Malaysia would continue to support the Philippines in its development efforts and would remain a committed partner in addressing regional and global development challenges.
76. **Mr. Díaz de la Guardia Beuno** (Observer for Spain), reviewer, said that it was very difficult to provide education, health services and infrastructure in a country with a population that was distributed across some 7,000 islands. His delegation wondered how the Government of the Philippines managed the islands with small populations and whether there was a development gap between the more populated islands and the less populated islands. It also sought further information on how environmental issues were considered in the country's development plans.
77. With regard to migration from rural to urban areas, he wondered whether there was now a large influx of people arriving in cities and if so whether the cities were able to cope with the growing populations. He also sought further information on the comprehensive agrarian reform programme, including whether it had been a success. Lastly, he asked whether the Government of the Philippines would do anything different now if it could go back to the inception of the MDGs.
78. **Mr. Balisacan** (Observer for the Philippines) said that the Government was working to strengthen economic growth in order to create the fiscal space needed to finance both the MDGs and the sustainable development goals, and was keenly aware that one-dimensional development in the social or environmental spheres without economic growth would not be sustainable. However, it was also working to combat corruption and poor governance, raise tax revenues and improve the delivery of public programmes and projects. To that end, it was mobilizing the private sector and development partners to leverage the country's limited resources.

79. With regard to the role of the private sector in sustainable development, the Philippines was largely a private sector-driven country, with 90 per cent of the economy in private hands, and many social services and the financial and insurance sectors were dominated by private sector enterprises. The Government was focusing its efforts on improving access to inclusive finance and insurance for all sectors, including small and medium-sized enterprises. It was also incorporating the private sector into the provision of public infrastructure through public-private partnerships. Those partnerships allowed it to gain access to the technology and information available in the private sector and to create fiscal space needed for social investments.
80. If the private sector were to play a larger role in the development of infrastructure, public resources that would have otherwise been used for that purpose could instead be channelled into much-needed investments in health care, education and social protection. Education and health care were also dominated by the private sector and the Government was using the private sector to facilitate country-wide implementation of the conditional cash transfer programme.
81. To minimize the impact of man-made and natural shocks, the Government was investing in disaster preparedness. The impact of shocks had been tremendous in terms of lives lost, damage to property and increased poverty, not to mention the effect on the national economy. Studies had shown that returns on investment in disaster preparedness were very high and were even higher than for most traditional infrastructure projects. The Government had adopted a "building back better" policy to ensure that, following a disaster infrastructure was rebuilt to a better state than prior to the disaster. It was working with the United Nations, the World Bank and other development partners to overcome technological and institutional challenges it faced in pursuing that policy.
82. The Government was also working with the World Bank and other development partners to establish a multi-layer insurance programme for the country and to expand access to insurance at the national and provincial levels for local governments, firms and households. The country could save substantial resources and prevent people from sliding into poverty if an insurance system was in place, but it needed assistance from its development partners in the form of analytical capability, technology and know-how.
83. The geography of the Philippines meant that addressing inequity, poverty and disasters was very complicated, as the various areas of the country were separated by seas. In addition, infrastructure around the country was quite poor and the nation was very diverse geographically, economically, socially and culturally. As a result, there was no one-size-fits-all response and the solution to poverty could vary considerably from one part of the country to another.
84. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) said that some of the challenges faced by the Philippines had also been faced by the United States of America. In particular, the economic growth sustained following the 2008-2009 crisis had not benefited all United States citizens, and the country's industries had been damaged by disaster and extreme weather. Localization of the post-2015 development agenda was crucial, and it was vital that local government units and non-governmental units should work together to achieve the sustainable development goals. He requested further information on how the media was employed to deepen the appreciation and understanding of the MDGs, and how it would be employed and deployed going forward.
85. **Mr. Percaya** (Observer for Indonesia) said that the challenges faced by developing countries in achieving the MDGs included obstacles to financing of an appropriate data system. It was important to strengthen the global partnership for development in order to generate the financial support needed to promote the transfer of technology to build those data systems. ASEAN had developed a road map to support the efforts of its member States to accelerate achievement of the MDGs. The Governments of the Philippines and Indonesia were actively working to implement that road map and would continue to cooperate in the pursuit of the MDGs and the sustainable development goals. His delegation wished to know what strategy the Philippines was pursuing to build the data systems required for sustainable development.
86. **Mr. Balisacan** (Observer for the Philippines) said that the media was quite free and very active in the Philippines. It was important to invest in good data collection, analysis and administration, to ensure that the information picked up by the media and other stakeholders was evidence-based. Many of the instances of conflict with the media had arisen because the data available had not been of a scientific standard,

and it was common to see media reports incorrectly portraying localized situations as national problems. Comprehensive data should be provided in a timely manner and good data analysis was therefore required. The media was seen as a development partner and it played a crucial role in providing the accountability and transparency that were required to achieve the MDGs and the sustainable development goals. However, the media should be able to pick up on quality information readily, and the country needed to invest aggressively in good collection and analysis.

87. There was no one-size-fits-all solution to the problems faced all over the country, especially as natural disasters affected different parts of the country at different times. Frequent data collection was vital so that the Government was aware of changes that were taking place in the welfare of certain sectors of the population.

88. In addition to chronic poverty, which accounted for three quarters of total poverty in the country, the Government was also working to tackle transitory poverty, which arose when people slipped into poverty following a disaster because they did not have insurance. Unfortunately, good data on those affected by transitory poverty were not available. However, fiscal space had expanded following a period of economic growth and the country was now in a position to fund data collection, but what it needed most from its development partners, especially its bilateral and multilateral partners, was the technology and know-how for data collection. Access to expertise and best practices was more important than financial resources, as the country had the resources but lacked the expertise, and it needed to move fast in building capacities.

Presentation by Zambia

89. **Mr. Mvunga** (Observer for Zambia), accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation and drawing attention to his country's report on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/2015/63), said that Zambia was a landlocked country with a favourable climate for agriculture and tourism. Its population of 15 million was spread over a large territory of 752,612 km², with 60 per cent living in rural areas, which posed challenges for service delivery. His Government's efforts to achieve the MDGs had been focused on

broad-based wealth creation, citizen participation, inclusive growth, job creation and rural development. Strengthening the economy had also been a priority, as poor economic performance had a negative impact on project implementation.

90. Inflation had peaked at 187.1 per cent in 1993 but had been kept under 10 per cent for the past decade. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate, which had been stagnant in the early 1990s, had reached 3.5 per cent in 2000 and had remained above 6 per cent since 2005. Foreign direct investment had increased from less than \$357 million in 2000 to \$2.2 billion in 2014. The Government was working to grow the agricultural, tourism and manufacturing sectors in order to decrease the economy's dependence on mineral exports. The external debt had been reduced from 179 per cent of GDP in 2002 to 10 per cent in 2007 and currently stood at 15 per cent. Official development assistance now represented 3 per cent of GDP compared with 5.9 per cent in 2009.

91. Despite that progress, poverty rates remained high, at 60.5 per cent overall and 77.9 per cent in rural areas, as the investment that had driven economic growth had been largely restricted to the mining sector. Furthermore, 75 per cent of the labour force was employed in the informal sector, where scant use of technology was keeping productivity levels low. Thus, MDG 1 had not been achieved.

92. With regard to MDG 3, gender parity had been reached in primary school enrolment, but had fallen in secondary school enrolment. The youth literacy rate had increased from 70.1 per cent in 2000 to 88.7 per cent in 2010, but the ratio of literate women to men had remained constant. Secondary school enrolment and completion rates had improved slightly. The ratio of women to men in tertiary education had grown over the past five years.

93. While MDGs 4 and 5 had not been achieved, progress had been made and was expected to continue: maternal mortality had declined from 729 per 100,000 births in 2002 to 398 per 100,000 births in 2013/14, under-five mortality from 191 per 1,000 births in 1992 to 75 per 1,000 births in 2013/14, and infant mortality from 107 per 1,000 births in 1992 to 45 per 1,000 births in 2013/14. Mortality rates were higher in rural areas, and there was a negative correlation between mortality rates and levels of education and income among women. The proportion of one-year-olds

immunized against measles had improved from 77 per cent in 1992 to 94 per cent in 2010, and now stood at 84 per cent, while the contraceptive prevalence rate had increased from 7 per cent in 1992 to 44.8 per cent in 2013/14.

94. Progress on MDG 6 had exceeded expectations: HIV prevalence stood at 13 per cent, compared with the national target of 15.6 per cent. Zambia was on track to meet the target of reducing the number of new HIV infections among children by 90 per cent by 2015, but girls and women continued to be disproportionately affected by the virus.

95. The percentage of the population with access to clean drinking water had increased to 63.1 per cent in 2013/14 from 49.0 per cent in 1991, which represented progress towards achieving MDG 7 and had also contributed to the decline in infant and child mortality rates. However, the increase in the proportion of the population without access to an improved sanitation facility from 26 per cent in 1991 to 72.7 per cent in 2010 was a cause for concern. With regard to biodiversity, the amount of officially protected land had remained relatively stable, but the actual amount of land covered by forest had fallen from 59.8 per cent to 49.9 per cent, primarily owing to an annual loss of between 250,000 and 300,000 hectares of forest to illegal felling.

96. Progress had been made on MDG 8. Official development assistance to Zambia had increased from 4.6 per cent of GDP in 2006 to 5.9 per cent in 2009, before falling to 3 per cent in 2013 as a result of the country's transition from low-income to lower-middle-income status. Grants had accounted for 0.8 per cent of Zambian GDP in 2013. The number of cellular telephone subscribers had grown from 50,000 in 2000 to over 10 million in 2012, although the functionality of many of those telephones was very basic. Internet penetration had increased from 17.3 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2012 to 18.5 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2013.

97. Challenges in the implementation of the MDG agenda had included the lack of a comprehensive legal framework, weak linkages between the national development plans and the medium-term expenditure framework, and poor coordination within and among the various levels of government. The national planning and budgeting policy adopted in 2014 would be reinforced by the national planning and budgeting

act, which was expected to be adopted before the end of 2015. The new framework would support the implementation of the sustainable development goals agenda by ensuring effective planning and coordination between different government departments and facilitating a bottom-up approach to planning, with the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society and grass-roots organizations, government departments and the international community.

98. The national approach to the implementation of the goals would focus on the promotion of greater social justice and equity in access to the fundamental drivers of development. Priorities would therefore include education, health care, food security, decent work, equality and economic diversification. Means would have to be found to generate revenue from the country's vast natural resources and to ensure equitable distribution of that revenue. National capacity to transform deep-rooted socio-cultural norms and values that inhibited participation in national processes had to be enhanced. That would be particularly challenging with regard to children's and women's issues, including child marriage.

99. It would also be important to promote technological development and innovation. Through its budgeting and planning policy, the Government was seeking to establish participatory nation-building, transparency and accountability. It also aimed to build the implementation capacity of national institutions in order to swiftly achieve development goals. Additionally, targeted programmes would be developed to empower vulnerable population groups.

100. The Zambian experience had revealed that outcome-based approaches produced better results than output-based approaches. For example, Goals 2 and 6 had been achieved as a result of efforts to strengthen institutional arrangements, establish appropriate policies and legislation and ensure broad participation. Feeding programmes, cash transfers, advocacy work and legislative and policy reforms had been jointly implemented by various entities to encourage school attendance. Similarly, an integrated approach to combatting HIV/AIDS, which had involved the creation of a well-structured national AIDS council, policy reform, enhancement of community awareness and increased access to treatment, had contributed to the achievement of MDG 6.

101. In contrast, the output-based approach to MDGs 4, 5 and 7 had been less successful. The failure to link outputs to overall outcomes had led to institutions operating in silos, and linkages between secondary and tertiary education and child mortality and maternal health had not been defined or adequately addressed. Similarly, improvement in infrastructure, including roads, electricity, water and sanitation, had not been identified as relevant to the achievement of MDGs 4 and 5. There had been a lack of coherence between policies and legislation on deforestation and the agricultural and industrial sectors, and efforts to promote the use of alternative energy sources had not included anti-deforestation measures. In future, action on climate change should be mainstreamed across the agricultural, energy and water sectors.

102. Ensuring that institutions were effective, transparent and accountable would be critical to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. That would include investment in data generation and effective monitoring, to enable institutions to make evidence-based decisions and better coordinate policies and plans. The lack of a strong legal and political framework for the implementation of the MDG agenda had resulted in weak linkages between plans and budgets and conflict between national and local development priorities. Furthermore, work on the MDGs had been primarily Government-led, and the limited involvement of citizens and interest groups had contributed to weak national ownership, poor public accountability and resource shortages. The new planning and budgeting framework was expected to prevent such problems in future.

103. The transformative approach of the sustainable development goals would provide a basis for social justice and dovetailed with Zambian values and development principles as well as with the Government's vision for the period up to 2030. Domestication of the goals would be ensured through broad-based engagement and the recognition that the goals were universal and, consequently, necessitated a new and equitable development cooperation architecture. The country's failure to achieve the MDGs would be taken into account in the national development plan for achieving the sustainable development goals.

104. The new goals would provide the Government with an opportunity to strengthen measures to support the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action

for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 and the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, adopt a comprehensive rights-based and equitable approach to national development, address the challenges of policy coordination and implementation, and mainstream all cross-cutting issues.

105. To bring about inclusive economic development and generate sufficient resources to ensure investment in social inclusion and improve the well-being of all Zambians, the country would have to embrace new technologies that would simultaneously improve living standards and address ecological challenges. The Government would also endeavour to involve the private sector in the effort to achieve the sustainable development goals by creating a comprehensive mechanism that would benefit all parties.

106. **Mr. Erdman** (United States of America), reviewer, said that the immense improvements in Zambia since the 1990s, spurred in part by the political and social stability in the country, demonstrated that sustainable development entailed sustained commitment. Zambia was an ethnically diverse country, but its Government had effectively developed a sense of nationhood and, consequently, a commitment to national development aspirations among the population. He asked what was being done to address the disproportionate levels of poverty that remained in rural areas in spite of the commendable macroeconomic progress that had been achieved.

107. Zambia had made impressive progress on reducing under-five mortality rates and improving access to reproductive health services, although the decline in maternal mortality, while significant, was less than expected. Noting the challenges that Zambia faced in making the transition to lower-middle-income status, he asked how that new status would impact future development policies and planning. He would also be interested to hear more about specific plans to improve governance in development planning, and about the data-related challenges and successes that had been experienced in relation to the country's MDG performance indicators. In conclusion, a description of the mistakes that had been made in Zambia would be of benefit to other Member States.

108. **Mr. Skoog** (Sweden), reviewer, said that his country had been cooperating with Zambia for fifty

years, during which time that country had made impressive progress. Zambia faced considerable transport and infrastructure challenges resulting from its status as a large, landlocked country. His delegation welcomed the Government's commitment to maintain high levels of economic growth while working to ensure equitable distribution of wealth, as well as its recognition that good governance, accountability, transparency, the rule of law and inclusive politics and participation were essential to maintaining sustainable development and promoting social cohesion.

109. He asked for concrete examples of how the Government intended to maintain its 6 per cent annual economic growth rate while also ensuring the improvement of human development indicators. He assumed that its approach would cover education, health care, food security and increased opportunities for women and youth.

110. While he recognized that Zambia currently had a low level of carbon emissions, he would be interested to hear how the Government planned to ensure that the country's extraction, tourism and agricultural sectors were being developed in a sustainable manner. He would also like to know how the Government planned to involve a broader range of stakeholders, including women and young people, in its strategic planning for the sustainable development goals.

111. **Mr. Mvunga** (Observer for Zambia) said that the key lesson to be learned from his country's experience in implementing the MDG agenda was the importance of coordination between sectors. The national planning and budgeting policy had been introduced in 2014 to resolve difficulties that had been experienced in that regard. The national planning and budgeting act, which would provide the necessary means to enforce the policy, was in the final stages of drafting. The law would provide for national, provincial and district development coordinating committees covering all sectors and comprising representatives of the Government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and traditional leaders, with a view to facilitating cross-sectoral coordination and the participation of relevant stakeholders, for a successful implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

112. Zambia had achieved political and social stability despite having a population comprising 73 ethnic groups, thanks largely to the "one Zambia, one nation" concept introduced under the country's first president,

Kenneth Kaunda, and the encouragement of inter-tribal marriage. The Government took the view that stimulating economic activity in rural areas would reduce poverty and bring about the active participation of those who had previously been excluded from economic activity. Most of the country's development programmes were already focused on investing more in rural areas. In particular, the Government was encouraging private-sector investment in such areas in agriculture and tourism through public-private partnerships. It was also investing heavily in infrastructure development; for example, it was building 650 health posts in rural areas and constructing roads to facilitate the distribution of farming products and inputs.

113. With regard to data-related challenges, a \$30 billion information and communications technology programme was under way to examine how technology could be used to increase operational efficiency across the country. A significant challenge was that currently data was often received much later than was necessary for planning purposes.

114. The Government was aware that discrimination against women remained the most pervasive form of inequality in Zambia, despite many efforts to improve the status of women. The 2011 Education Act promoted equality in access to, and the successful completion of, education, and the Government was also establishing new universities across the country to meet the increasing demand for higher education for women. It also planned to open a women's bank before the end of 2015, which should help drive women's economic empowerment.

115. With regard to climate change, the Government had been predominately considering renewable energy sources for development. However, deforestation had somewhat unexpectedly been revealed as a problem: not only was wood charcoal the primary source of energy in Zambia, but there had recently been an increase in the illegal felling of a species of tree that was highly valued for its timber.

116. **Ms. Virgill-Rolle** (Observer for the Bahamas) said that her country was like the Philippines in that it was an archipelago with the majority of the population concentrated in an urban centre. It also experienced similar data-related challenges to those that had been mentioned. Her Government was taking a phased approach to development planning to ensure it had a

solid evidence base to use in decision-making. The first phase involved in-depth consideration of the economy, social policy, governance and the environment. That would be followed by a general consultation and then the finalization of the plan in late 2015.

117. Her country was making efforts to promote grass-roots engagement and ensure the participation of the entire population, including civil society and the academic and private sectors. The comments from the presenters on how to build planning and development capacity and establish permanent institutions had been particularly useful in that regard, as had the policy notes on national development strategies developed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

118. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) commended the Government of Zambia for its efforts to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation measures into its national development plans, despite significant challenges, and noted that the Zambian Government had recognized the drawbacks of a silo approach for all government departments, not only those working on climate-related issues.

119. He asked the presenters to comment on either their concerns about leaving the MDGs behind, on any mistakes their countries had made with regard to the MDGs, and on what excited them most about undertaking the sustainable development goals.

120. **Ms. Niyazalieva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that Kyrgyzstan had made significant progress towards achieving the MDGs, including radical reductions in poverty, child mortality and malaria, universal access to high school education, and gender equality in the parliament, where women now accounted for 25 per cent of the membership. The Government was also stepping up efforts to attract women to leadership positions, in the hope that they would account for fully 50 per cent of parliament membership by 2030.

121. However, problems still remained with regard to maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS, owing in part to a lack of budgetary resources and the high cost of health care. However, each year the country was receiving donor funds and accumulating further resources and hoped that the situation would soon improve. The high rate of maternal mortality was linked to the lack of highly trained and qualified medical personnel, especially in rural areas. Kyrgyzstan had initiated a programme for the training of doctors, especially in

rural areas, and included more training at the university level, in an effort to improve the situation. The country had also redefined its guidelines to broaden the scope of preschool education in order to achieve better results

122. In spite of serious budgetary constraints, the Government was still allocating substantial financial resources to social programmes. Salaries for teachers had increased by 50 per cent, while pay for medical staff had gone up threefold. Pensions and social welfare payments had also been increased. The next priorities for the sustainable development goals were to define guidelines for disease prevention. The Government was currently working with civil society to develop indicators for those goals and the post-2015 development agenda, focusing on the MDGs that the country had been unable to achieve.

123. Despite the country's limited resources, it was continuing to make contributions to goals 3 and 4 in particular. With 200 new indicators that it had developed, Kyrgyzstan hoped that it would be more successful in achieving the sustainable development goals than the MDGs. While the MDGs had been very broad, the sustainable development goals allowed countries to adapt all the indicators to their own realities.

124. **Mr. Khurelbaatar** (Observer for Mongolia) said that although his country had been able to achieve some of the MDGs, including poverty reduction, income disparity had increased and must be addressed through the sustainable development goals. Although half of the population of Mongolia lived in Ulaanbaatar, the city had received only 20 to 30 per cent of budgeted investments in pursuit of the MDGs. He hoped that funds aimed at the sustainable development goals would be better distributed. His Government's priorities were to achieve the remaining MDGs, build a more diverse and environmentally friendly economy and end alleviate the country's economic and financial problems.

125. **Mr. Balisacan** (Observer for the Philippines) said that poverty and employment were the two major development concerns in the Philippines, and in the medium term the Government would be focusing on substantially reducing poverty. The economy had gained traction over the past couple of years but poverty had not been reduced accordingly. Similarly, little progress had been made in generating quality

employment and levels of under-employment were high in rural areas. Creating high-quality jobs outside of agriculture would continue to be a priority for policymakers.

126. The Government was excited about the future and the shift to sustainable development concerns and had learned key lessons from both its national experiences and the experiences of other countries. It now had a better understanding of the importance of data and had been investing more to gain access to better and more reliable data, which would better inform its policies and decision-making. It was encouraging that stronger political commitments had now been made by national Governments and at the regional and global levels, and that better networking, coordination and linkages were facilitating the exchange of information about best practices. The Philippines looked forward to being part of the global community of learning.

127. **Mr. Mvunga** (Observer for Zambia) said that his Government was excited by the opportunities to learn from its failings in the implementation of the MDG agenda in order to optimize its implementation of the sustainable development goals. It recognized the importance of proper planning for budget coordination, which included ensuring universal buy-in from local stakeholders, including politicians, district-level governments, traditional rulers, non-governmental organizations and ordinary citizens. Failure to develop the tools for determining success and measuring progress had led his Government to lose sight of the importance of human development issues, such as the promotion of women and the equitable distribution of wealth, when planning its efforts to achieve the MDGs. He firmly believed that proper preparation would prevent poor performance in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

128. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) said that the presentations had offered useful lessons for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. It would be important to consider all sectors of the population to ensure that nobody was left behind. Grass-roots involvement would be essential to achieving the goals. Those involved in implementation would have to be prepared for the increase in e-mails and telephone calls that would result from greater coordination and communication.

129. It would be important to consider how to ensure that achievement of the goals would not be disrupted or

hindered by the political changes that would occur in most Member States during the implementation period. There would also need to be a focus on diversifying economies and making the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Obtaining appropriate data was of vital importance, as was establishing definitive milestones to monitor progress. Governments should consider what had not been completed by the MDGs, whether they were ready to finish that work, and whether efforts to do so would take a different form under the sustainable development goals. He agreed that sustainable development entailed sustained commitment and that the sustainable development goals were relevant to all Member States.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.



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President: Mr. Drobnjak (Vice-President) (Croatia)
later: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) (Republic of Korea)

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Drobnyak (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Thematic discussion on the theme “Strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era” (E/2015/69)

1. **The President** said that the theme chosen for the thematic discussion reflected the importance of institutions in the transition towards a new development framework based on the sustainable development goals. Effective institutions were both enablers and outcomes of development; they not only had an essential role to play in the development of policies and practices, the coordination of activities and the mobilization of people and resources, but also embodied the values and vision of their societies. To fulfil the vision for the post-2015 era, institutions must be able to manage complex challenges, competing development objectives and a wide variety of coherent actions at all levels of governance. Implementing the coherent, integrated and mutually reinforcing approaches that would be needed across sectors, governance levels and systems to support those efforts would require overcoming considerable constraints at the operational, political and capacity levels.
2. Although institutions would be instrumental in realizing the transformative vision of the post-2015 development agenda, they would have to adapt to the realities of the post-2015 era in order to remain relevant and effective. They must become multi-disciplinary, participatory, collaborative, adaptable and capable of working across organizational boundaries in order to draw on a broader base of knowledge, skills and resources. Institutional transformation would require a fundamental shift in mindset and attitudes driven by strong leadership, a clear vision, government ownership, good communication and effective capacity-building. Ambition and innovation would be keys to overcoming the challenges posed by the vast scope of the new development agenda.
3. **Mr. El-Keib** (former Interim Prime Minister of Libya and Member of Club de Madrid), delivering the keynote address, said that Member States had a historical destiny to usher in a new era for development and should be conscious of the view that history would take of any failure to fully grasp that opportunity. The Club de Madrid was a network of over 100 democratically elected former Heads of State and Government who were working to build and strengthen institutions in order to promote policy integration in the post-2015 era. A “shared society”, based on social inclusion and inclusive institutions, was a core element in overcoming crises and achieving development objectives.
4. He had taken up the position of Interim Prime Minister of Libya at a time when four decades of dictatorial rule had created a non-inclusive society characterized by fragility, conflict and violence. The interim Government’s understanding of the importance of all members of society had resulted in a reasonable level of peace and stability and the temporary unification of the people. Like other States in similar situations, Libya had wanted and needed help in identifying risks and developing solutions, but had at times been suspicious of those who were offering assistance. His country’s unique culture and lack of democratic institutions and traditions, in addition to the specific circumstances that had led to the uprising, had meant that a one-size-fits-all approach was not appropriate.
5. The goal of his interim Government had been to hold the first democratic parliamentary elections in nearly 50 years while preserving the unity of the nation. The situation had been precarious in the aftermath of the uprising which, though initially peaceful, had become bloody. The 16,000 criminals that had been armed and released by the former regime had threatened the stability of the country, and the legacy of ethnic and regional conflicts resulting from the former leader’s divide-and-rule tactics had been exacerbated by well-funded counter-revolutionary forces determined to sabotage the democratization process. The situation had been further compounded by rampant nepotism and corruption within State institutions, a virtually non-existent judicial system and the unreliability of the armed forces, police and intelligence services. Many people had been in favour of a democratic process but had feared that it would fail, while others had been angered by the social marginalization, economic deprivation or lack of opportunities they faced, and had been mistrustful of the central Government.
6. However, the nation had come together and, with support from the United Nations and other partners, elections had been held in a safe, free and transparent environment within the agreed time frame of just over

seven months. To achieve that goal during such challenging times, the interim Government had had to manage the high expectations of the people, set realistic objectives, identify priorities, remain focused and work with all parties concerned to rally the entire country around the common goal. To win the moral and political trust of the people, it had acted on its conviction that leaders must respect the rights and aspirations of all members of society, and that hope, humility, humanity and a sense of humour were keys to effective leadership. Staff had been recruited from all regions and efforts had been made to resolve conflicts across the country. Economic measures had been introduced to address market issues and private sector concerns as well as the dire financial circumstances in which many families had found themselves.

7. Since highly centralized governance had been a cause of the conflict, the interim Government had drafted a law to accord greater responsibility to provincial and municipal authorities. Unfortunately, the implementation of that law had been delayed. A national reconciliation body had been established, reintegration and development programmes for former combatants and the families of those who had died in the war had been introduced, and all members of the armed forces and the police continued to be employed. Despite those measures, Libya still faced multi-dimensional security challenges and would benefit from assistance provided by honest brokers who understood the complexity of the issue.

8. There were a number of general lessons that could be learned from the Libyan experience. First, institutions needed legitimacy in order to bring society together. That legitimacy must be earned through popular support and trust, which in turn could only be achieved through transparency. Every sector of the population must feel that the institutions understood, and were making efforts to address, their needs. Once a good relationship between the State and the population had been established, they could motivate one another and work together to continue to further develop those bonds and build a shared society.

9. External forces could either help or hinder that process. The international community had a critical role to play in preventing external forces from undermining the shared society for their own purposes. However, even well-intentioned efforts of the international community could have a negative impact, as States had their own agendas and often proved

unwilling to take into account the experience, concerns and aspirations of those they were trying to assist. The international community and development agencies should be sensitive and responsive to each situation and those affected by it, and should listen to the people and ensure that leaders were held accountable.

10. There were other specific lessons learned from the Libyan experience that could be useful to intergovernmental agencies. Technical mechanisms or money alone were not sufficient to build peace; solutions were to be found at the intersection of political and economic processes and must be rooted in a thorough understanding of the socio-political environment of the country, constructive dialogue, national reconciliation and the establishment of an inclusive society. It was also important to be aware that even after a reasonable level of peace and stability had been achieved, a country could experience another bout of violence that would worsen the security situation. The establishment of peaceful, inclusive societies was a long process requiring resources and expertise for appropriate planning, implementation, follow-up, evaluation and development of corrective actions. Therefore, the role of the international community and development agencies must not only be to facilitate national dialogue and transition, but also to ensure that the desired outcomes were achieved and to assist States in overcoming implementation challenges.

11. The outcome of the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa would largely determine whether sufficient resources would be made available for the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Those resources should cover not only aid delivery but also the implementation of a fair and equitable global economic system that would ensure that the wealth of developing countries was not drained by practices such as unfair pricing and profit-shifting. It was encouraging that the General Assembly, the most inclusive intergovernmental body in the world, had already been able to make some progress on the critical issues of the sustainable development goals and financing for development. The concerns and interests of all States must be heard and taken into account at the global level, just as inclusive participation was essential at the national level.

12. To reach agreement at the national level, the interim Government of Libya had recognized, first, that if problems could not be resolved immediately, it was

important to at least establish mechanisms for further work on them. Second, parties should focus less on what they wished others to do and more on what they could to do to enable an agreement to be reached. Third, in the case of disagreement, parties should make a sincere effort to understand each other's point of view and needs.

13. **Mr. Chowdhury** (President, Inter-Parliamentary Union), panellist, said that stronger and more effective institutions would be needed to ensure the success of the post-2015 agenda and, in particular, the sustainable development goals. While many institutions would be involved in overcoming the formidable challenge of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development — the economic, the social and the cultural — and all of the goals into coherent policy action, his remarks would focus specifically on the role of parliaments.

14. Consideration of the new transformative agenda did not concern only a set of goals but also the institutions that would be responsible for realizing those goals. The legislative and executive branches of Government must be able to forge a partnership. Parliaments must be fit for purpose: effective, capable and able to deliver. Business as usual was not a viable option; institutional transformation would require thinking outside the box.

15. While the sustainable development goals had been universally agreed, there was a lack of shared vision with respect to their implementation. The political environment in some countries was highly polarized along party or ideological lines, and weaknesses in many political systems had allowed particular interest groups to dominate political agendas at the expense of the common good. For example, reallocating the \$5 billion paid out every year in fossil fuel subsidies to investment in renewable energy would bring substantial benefits to the economy, the environment and communities. Furthermore, since elections were held every few years, Governments tended to work on establishing their political bases rather than focusing on policy coherence and continuity.

16. A related issue was the lack of continuity resulting from the short terms of office of parliamentarians. The Inter-Parliamentary Union was therefore calling on parliaments to evaluate their internal processes in order to identify ways to

institutionalize the sustainable development goals. The establishment of a national structure to oversee the integration of the goals into national development plans could serve to remind parliaments that the goals required consistent and integrated actions and would also serve as a means of overcoming the silo approach taken by many parliaments. Such a body could take the form of a special committee, a caucus or a special advisory group, depending on the structure of each particular parliament.

17. The most important way to ensure policy coherence at the national level was for parliaments to be involved more systematically and methodically in the design and review of national sustainable development plans. Those plans should be developed with the highest possible levels of public consultation and ownership, as the exclusion of certain sectors of society would result in biased policies. For example, poverty would not be eradicated unless the poor were empowered and directly involved in the shaping of national development plans. Therefore, all parliaments must be inclusive and representative of the electorate. Gender equality in parliaments was also a key priority for the Inter-Parliamentary Union in that regard.

18. The current year was a significant one for United Nations processes related to the analytical aspect of policy integration. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 had been adopted in March 2015, and the third International Conference on Financing for Development, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 and the twenty-first United Nations Climate Change Conference would take place later in 2015. Those separate processes should generate interlocking and mutually reinforcing results, as their coherence, convergence and integration were necessary for policy coherence.

19. The effectiveness of national sustainable development policies would largely depend on a supportive and enabling global environment. There was a need for appropriate economic, financial and trade governance at the global level to support legislative and regulatory reforms at the national level. As an example, it would be useless for parliaments to increase domestic taxes in order to generate resources for development if the international community were not able to strengthen the international tax regime in such a way as to prevent tax avoidance by large multinational corporations. Furthermore, parliamentarians should have access to high-quality, independent analyses and data that would

inform the legislative and oversight processes concerning the sustainable development goals, particularly since the 17 goals were expected to be accompanied by 169 targets and a large number of indicators.

20. The need to strengthen and build institutions to promote policy integration in the post-2015 era applied to parliaments in both developing and developed countries, in varying degrees. The Inter-Parliamentary Union was doing its part to address capacity needs and provide guidance on the role of parliaments. However, it would need support from Governments and the United Nations system in order to truly make a difference.

21. **Ms. Bethel** (Director and Chief Executive Officer, National Insurance Board of the Bahamas, and Vice-Chair, United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration), panellist, said that government agencies must adopt strategies, programmes and projects that included the three dimensions of sustainable development simultaneously and took account of their inherent complexities and interdependencies. The sustainable development goals framework called for an unprecedented level of policy integration, as it was cross-cutting in nature and most of the goals required some degree of common effort and cooperation among governmental structures.

22. Decision-making on matters related to sustainable development involved a complex array of jurisdictions, multiple social and economic priorities, varying stakeholder interests, complex scientific knowledge and international considerations. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration had found that institutional constraints to policy integration typically included overly hierarchical structures, lack of a common strategic policy direction, sectoral self-interest and complicated division of labour. Those structural challenges could be compounded by inadequate mechanisms for allocating resources for cross-cutting issues and ensuring shared accountability for shared responsibilities. Disincentives to policy integration among public servants further included a lack of skills, perceived loss of power or authority, competition for resources, and corruption.

23. The purpose of policy integration should be to ensure effective policymaking within sectors and also convince sectoral actors to explore the benefits of cross-sectoral cooperation. Policy integration efforts

comprised both structural and behavioural approaches. The behavioural approach consisted in providing a platform to promote a culture of sharing, for example, data and resources, and reducing the silo-type mindset of public officials. A structural approach consisted in redefining agency functions, for example, between central and local governments and/or with a lead coordinating agency tasked with reducing fragmentation through a review of programmes.

24. Policy integration efforts were more likely to succeed when there were clear goals uniting experts, the public and decision makers and top-level leadership, in combination with bottom-up support from civil society. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration had identified a number of specific ways of supporting policy integration beyond institutional realignment, including a "cascading strategy" in which an institution identified strategic objectives from which key performance indicators were established for each level of administration, with subordinate objectives defined for each individual agency.

25. Developing clear goals, performance indicators and standards had been proven to help institutions achieve clearer strategic direction, which in turn supported policy integration across levels. Other methods included enforcement of aggregate fiscal discipline, interoperability of systems and data, and engagement of national and local governments in policy processes. Bringing local governments into the picture of sustainable development goals implementation was vital not only to foster coherence and synchronization across levels of administration but also because local governments had an inherent advantage in policy integration owing to the smaller number of actors involved and greater overlap of functions. Beyond making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, such involvement might also help to counter the perception that the sustainable development goals were simply an initiative of the central Government.

26. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration reiterated the widely held view that national and local contexts really mattered. For effective policy integration in pursuit of the sustainable development goals, it was important to consider a country's specific sustainable development conditions. Promoting local ownership of locally relevant goals and targets was critical if the sustainable development goals were to be meaningful to people and lead to

commitment and action. A better sense was needed of how policy would play out across different regions and in different types of countries, for example least developed countries and countries emerging from conflict, and what sequencing of reforms may be implied given different resources, capacities and governance systems.

27. She was pleased to see the issue of policy integration being discussed at the international level. Often there were a number of multilateral agencies doing very good work to improve governance at the national level, but a lack of coordination between them could leave countries with a heavy reporting burden that could in fact hinder their efforts. Ensuring that only one or two agencies could seek similar information from Governments would be enormously helpful to jurisdictions that did not have the resources to respond to similar requests from multiple agencies.

28. **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), panellist, said that the transition to a new agenda centred on the sustainable development goals called for a paradigm shift owing to the scope and depth of the agenda and the broad-based mobilization required at all levels of action. As the goals encompassed areas that transcended the boundaries of established policy fields, institutions and actors, their implementation would require an integrated and coherent vision supported by concerted action and coherent policies from a broad range of traditional and non-traditional stakeholders. Success would depend not only on a new mindset but also on an in-depth resetting and retooling of development and business practices in order to respond to, and manage the demands of, a broader and more integrated agenda.

29. Institutions were central to that process; they were key enablers of development as long as they were effective, but became major constraints if they failed to take current and emerging needs into account. The paradigm shift must therefore necessarily begin from within the institutions. The cross-cutting and universal nature of the new agenda, while being important, would make implementation by institutions challenging, particularly when combined with the commitment to leave no one behind.

30. The ambitious goals contained in the agenda would probably necessitate a shift from exclusive to inclusive implementation, which would involve

seeking out new actors that could be empowered to further the agenda. While such a change would be a major challenge for institutions accustomed to working within mandates and with specific actors, meeting all of the needs and aspirations covered by the sustainable development goals would be impossible unless institutions were able to make use of the resources and ambition of every available actor.

31. Policy-development and service-delivery processes that mobilized civil society, the private sector and other non-State actors must be established and managed at the national and subnational levels. Existing systems, modalities and mandates would have to be restructured in order to enable government departments and agencies that traditionally worked in silos to become more collaborative. Building the capacity of governmental agencies to manage multi-stakeholder engagement in problem-solving would be critical, as would equipping outside stakeholders to work with those agencies. Transformational leadership would be essential in creating a culture of change and innovation, but processes, structures and individuals able to spur, sustain and support innovation and adaptation in the long term would also be required.

32. Institutional change would also be required at the regional and global levels in order to remove existing barriers to integrated policymaking. In that regard, it was encouraging that the Inter-Parliamentary Union had taken the lead in asking parliaments to consider the implications of the sustainable development goals. Reform would be required at all levels to remove systemic obstacles to a more balanced approach to sustainable development. That would require rebalancing the relations between markets, States, societies and other users of natural resources.

33. At the regional level, institutional integration would help forge the regional approaches to shared challenges and transboundary concerns that would be essential in order to generate economies of scale and minimize policy trade-offs. At the global level, institutional reform would promote greater coherence in the implementation of economic, social and environmental agendas, thereby ensuring that progress on one of those dimensions did not come at the expense of the others. New forms of more flexible and horizontal governance, such as multi-stakeholder partnerships, networks and transnational networked governance, had already emerged, particularly in the context of climate governance. However, the

effectiveness and legitimacy of such approaches had not yet been determined.

34. The United Nations system would also need to adapt and become fit for purpose. Stakeholders participating in the first phase of the dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda had stressed the need for United Nations entities to come up with a more integrated and tailored response to the specific needs and priorities of States. The second phase of the dialogue, which would begin after the Sustainable Development Summit, would include an examination of the details of the proposals made in the first phase, including the idea of transforming the quadrennial comprehensive policy review into a strategic tool for system-wide policy direction and accountability.

35. In conclusion, while a large number of goals and targets could be used to determine whether implementation of the sustainable development agenda had been successful, to gauge whether institutions were becoming fit for purpose, it would be important to determine simply whether their actions were strengthening the relationship between duty bearers and rights holders; and whether anyone was being left behind.

36. **The President** said that the international community had made every effort to manage high expectations in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, in a context where many individuals lacked hope, education and opportunities. Endurance, resources and expertise were essential to future action, and the Council must ensure that the economy, the environment and communities benefited from its work. Parliamentarians must review and take ownership of national sustainable development policies. Lack of skills, competition for resources and corruption would hinder the implementation of the agenda. Experts, decision makers and the public must be united in such implementation, to which competitiveness and ambition were essential.

Interactive discussion

37. **Ms. Mxakato-Diseko** (South Africa) said that the global financial and economic order must be taken into account in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Coordination rather than competition among United Nations system organizations was needed, and the agenda must be supported by global rules. In South Africa, where the

principle of separation of powers was enshrined in the Constitution, the role of parliament in the implementation of the sustainable development goals would be to scrutinize the national plans drafted by the executive rather than to design such plans itself. The roles of Government, parliament and civil society must be clearly delineated. Public officials would ultimately implement the goals and must be held accountable by parliaments and other entities.

38. In Africa, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had resulted in a decade of gruelling reforms requiring even ministers to submit performance agreements and to be held accountable for reaching specific targets. Public officials would not accept further reform for the implementation of the sustainable development goals if they felt that it would undermine the successes of the MDGs. The language used in discussions regarding the sustainable development goals must not imply that the implementation of those goals was an impossible task. It should take into account the strengths and weaknesses of States without giving the impression that they must abandon their current course. States had been instructed to outsource service delivery during the implementation of the MDGs and had only recently rebuilt their capacities, as shown by the response to the Ebola epidemic.

39. National circumstances and political cultures should be taken into account in the implementation of the sustainable development goals, and every effort should be made to avoid the establishment of an industry that competed with Governments and the poor rather than build on existing achievements. In Africa, development was not an abstract concept but the key to improving people's lives, and the Council had an important role to play in providing guidance to Governments on that continent. The international community must build on the successes of the MDGs in its quest to implement the sustainable development agenda. The African Union, the Southern African Development Community and other African regional coordination mechanisms could not be expected to abandon their work in the field of integration and embark on wholly new reforms with a view to implementing that agenda.

40. **The President** requested further information on the ways in which a balance between shared burdens and shared benefits could be struck; on how the sustainable development goals could be translated into

operational reality; and on key performance indicators for public administration.

41. **Mr. El-Keib** (former Interim Prime Minister of Libya and Member of Club de Madrid) said that the aspirations of African countries, many of which faced problems but had much to offer the rest of the world, were being addressed through the African Union. Although some developed countries felt that African States had little to contribute and should be left to solve their problems alone, development was a matter for the international community as a whole. All countries should therefore treat each other with consideration and help each other to share in the benefits of cooperative endeavours.
42. **Mr. Chowdhury** (President, Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that the separation of powers was an important principle, but a cross-sectoral, complementary strategic partnership between the legislative and executive branches was required rather than a compartmentalized approach based on silos. In many Constitutions, the role of parliament comprised oversight, appropriation of resources and alignment of national legislation and policy with international commitments. Parliamentarians must therefore be involved not only in overseeing but also in designing the post-2015 development agenda. Changes in mindset were required to ensure that parliamentarians could exercise their functions effectively. Although the oversight role of parliamentarians made tension between the executive and legislative branches inevitable, a new international framework was needed to ensure that all components worked together to achieve the best results.
43. With regard to translating the sustainable development goals into operational reality, the theme of the 132nd Assembly of the International Parliamentary Union, held in Hanoi in March 2015, had been "Turning words into action". Parliaments themselves could not implement the sustainable development goals, but they could help Governments to do so. They must be representative in order to ensure inclusive policies and leave no one behind, and they must operate in an optimal environment. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had estimated that \$100 billion in tax revenue was lost to developing countries every year, while the infrastructure financing gap in Africa was \$93 billion.
44. If parliaments were viewed as strategic partners, more would be achieved during the implementation of the sustainable development goals than during the implementation of the MDGs, when parliamentarians did not become involved until after 2005. Fortunately, parliaments had been involved in the sustainable development goals from the start, thereby ensuring that those goals were more inclusive than the MDGs. The deepening relationship between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union would be instrumental in the achievement the sustainable development goals.
45. **Ms. Bethel** (Director and Chief Executive Officer, National Insurance Board of the Bahamas, and Vice-Chair, United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration) said that performance indicators were essential to ensure that administrations met the expectations of stakeholders. They should help to reduce delays in the provision of government services and enable more efficient interaction between citizens and Governments. Databases and processes should be integrated and information should be shared. In the business environment, processing times for permit applications should be reduced. Public administrations were seeking a delivery mechanism for the sustainable development goals. The good practices that had emerged from the implementation of the MDGs should not be abandoned.
46. The need to achieve the sustainable development goals afforded such administrations an opportunity to become more flexible, coordinated and integrated, while establishing the predictable environment expected by stakeholders. Although some countries had more elaborate public administration systems than others, all shared the view that no one should be left behind. Each administration would need to establish a transparent, inclusive and responsive environment, taking into account specific national characteristics, in order to offer citizens optimal opportunities in a sustainable way while preserving the three dimensions of the sustainable development goals. Small States would find such a transition particularly challenging.
47. **Ms. Kage** (Germany) recalled that while the international community was planning for the next 15 years, elected politicians generally worked within four- to five-year time frames. She asked how that difference in administrative timelines could be bridged in order to ensure that subsequent administrations embraced the sustainable development goals.

48. **Mr. Chowdhury** (President, Inter-Parliamentary Union), said that achieving cross-party consensus and integrating the sustainable development goals within national development plans would allow the focus to remain on the goals, regardless of election results, and would prevent them from becoming the subject of internal political disputes.

49. **The President** sought clarification as to the best way to communicate the validity of the sustainable development goals to those to whom they were intended; and as to the importance of policy integration at the international and global levels to ensure simplicity and greater effectiveness.

50. **Mr. Gass** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that different methods were required to communicate the goals, targets and their benefits to different people. To ensure relevant national dialogue and government and public-institution accountability, individuals should be made aware of the targets that corresponded to their needs and aspirations.

51. He agreed that national circumstances and political cultures should be taken into account in the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Indeed, it was perhaps a positive development that the sustainable development goals were not accompanied by an international implementation plan. As such, dialogue at the national level, which was already taking place in some countries, was the necessary next step. Engagement with regional groups should also be discussed at the national level.

52. The work of the Africa Group in keeping the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda on track demonstrated the importance of such engagement. Furthermore, if the international community wished to achieve that ambitious set of goals, non-State actors present in the territory and ready to assist at the national level should be mobilized. Because there were no set rules on how the agenda was to be implemented, each country was responsible for choosing its own path. However, States should be aware that what had been a strength in the *implementation of the MDGs, namely the capacity to coordinate and implement a log frame*, could prove to be a weakness in the implementation of a plan as broad as the sustainable development agenda. The international community needed to harness the inherent

integrated energy of the sustainable development goals. Accordingly, instead of attributing each goal to a specific institution or restructuring the institutional framework, the various administrative branches should work collectively towards each of the goals.

53. Technical support and task teams, which made use of all the available expertise from the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, had been doing their utmost to provide their services throughout the post-2015 development agenda negotiation process. For the implementation of that agenda, Member States should ask what steps they needed to take in order to strengthen the capacity of public administration to serve rights holders and the capacity of rights holders to understand and request those services. They should also initiate their actions and planning by first reflecting on which groups were the most vulnerable. They had to assess the reasons for that vulnerability, the threats they faced and how those threats could be mitigated.

54. **Mr. Chowdhury** (President, Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that the existence of separate committees for the sustainable development goals at parliamentary level was tantamount to recognition of the failure to internalize the goals at the State level. National action and ownership of the goals were needed. Governments should hold public hearings to help them in the development of their implementation plans and to ensure that the people participated in the process. Though many stakeholders would be involved, including the private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations, parliaments had a distinct role to play in that they were constitutionally mandated to appropriate funds, pass finance bills, and legislate on such matters. A harmonized structure at both the national and the international levels would enable the international community to focus on the goal of leaving no one behind.

55. **Ms. Bethel** (Director and Chief Executive Officer, National Insurance Board of the Bahamas, and Vice-Chair, United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration) said that public administration was evolving. Though the task of starting anew could be daunting, the sustainable development goals would help the international community to respond to the public's changing expectations and needs, thereby ensuring that no one was left behind. The success of public administration depended on cooperation with the political leadership. Inclusiveness and the provision

of opportunities for engagement were also important, including raising public awareness during the early stages of implementation.

56. Moreover, the roles of the political leaders and administrators would have to be clarified in order to avoid potential confusion. A national debate would help to raise awareness of achievements at the national level, which would in turn facilitate implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

57. She hoped that international agencies, a number of which had already begun to work in some form on various aspects of the sustainable development goals, would engage more cooperatively. Some agencies sometimes requested small countries to produce information and sanctioned them if they failed to do so within a specific time frame. That was not the ideal way forward. The international community had to be more pragmatic with regard to its expectations. International cooperation was, therefore, an imperative. The United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration would be exploring more deeply the transition to and transformational strategies associated with the implementation of the sustainable development goals, which would allow it to identify the best practices to help countries move forward.

58. *Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea) took the Chair.*

Closing of the high-level segment

Closing remarks by the Secretary-General

59. **The Secretary-General** said that the world had made much progress over the past decade and a half, extreme poverty and child mortality rates had been cut by more than half, more girls were in school and fewer people were dying of killer diseases. Those critical advances had not happened on their own; they had required strong financial support, political leadership, and the enormous efforts of people themselves – from the leadership of Governments to the actions and hard work of the poorest villager.

60. Although the international community was already working to establish a new development agenda for the coming 15 years, there was still a long way to go. Too many still suffered from chronic undernutrition. Preventable diseases continued to be the top killers of children under five years of age. At the same time, the broader picture of progress largely excluded women, those at the lowest rungs of the

economic ladder, and those discriminated against because of age, disability or ethnicity.

61. Meanwhile, inequality was growing, climate change was threatening the planet, and conflicts were derailing hard-won progress. The MDGs had shown what was possible when the international community came together around common goals. The Economic and Social Council had demonstrated the value of bringing the United Nations system together to support their implementation. It had served as the hub for Member States and others to review progress, linking the national, regional and global levels.

62. The Partnerships Forum had helped to focus efforts and enhance effectiveness, which was critical for delivering on the post-2015 development agenda. That event marked the end of the review of the MDGs in the Council, and also laid the foundation for the transition to the sustainable development goals — an ambitious and universal agenda.

63. On the eve of the start of the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa, he wanted to underscore the importance of achieving an ambitious agreement. By doing so, the international community could not only lay a framework for financing, but indeed a framework for success ahead of the adoption of the sustainable development goals in New York in September 2015. Governments would also be making good on their commitment to approve a universal, meaningful climate agreement in Paris in December 2015.

64. He urged all parties to overcome differences and find a common pathway starting from Addis Ababa and leading to the end of poverty and a sustainable world for all. Going forward, the high-level political forum on sustainable development — under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly — would play a central role in reviewing the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Discussions within the Council and the forum had helped to outline how the forum could organize its work, keep track of progress and bolster implementation. Success would depend on a firm political will to work together.

65. The Council was now stronger and should fully use its power to spur integration and help mobilize a range of actors and the United Nations system. The United Nations development system had to be made fit to deliver the support needed. The Council had already

launched that dialogue, and he looked forward to a successful outcome of those deliberations.

66. Lastly, he wished to commend the outgoing President of the Council, Mr. Sajdik, and the Bureau for their strong and enlightened leadership over the last 18 months. He knew Mr. Sajdik had moved on to new challenges, but wished to acknowledge that he had brought the Council a long way towards a smooth transition to the ambitious tasks ahead. He sincerely hoped that under the leadership of its incoming President, Mr. Oh Joon, the Council would make a great contribution to humanity by helping to achieve the sustainable development goals and to reach the universal and ambitious climate change agreement in December.

Closing remarks by the President

67. **The President** said that the high-level segment and the high-level political forum had offered valuable policy guidance for the transition from the MDGs to the post-2015 development agenda. That transition would provide an opportunity to advance prosperity for people and to preserve the planet. Member States should be ready to meet the full requirements of the new agenda. Through the Council, they had a vehicle to enable such a transition.

68. The Council should work to promote policy integration and reduce inequalities. It was now equipped to fulfil its role as the principal body for the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The Council had advanced ownership, engagement, implementation, follow-up and review at the global level, and its system had become an interlocking framework connecting the high-level political forum, functional and regional commissions, expert bodies and specialized agencies. That system should be used in its entirety to support implementation, monitoring and review of the new agenda. In the post-2015 era, the international community should mobilize its resources, energy and vision to confront the challenges that faced it.

69. He declared closed the high-level segment of the 2015 session of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.



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Fourth coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 50th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 20 July 2015, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) (Republic of Korea)

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Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

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15-12207 (E)



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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Economic and environmental questions (continued)

(d) Human settlements (A/70/8; E/2015/72)

1. **Ms. Djacta** (United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), introducing the report of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat on its twenty-fifth session (A/70/8) and the report of the Secretary-General on coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (E/2015/72), said that with the world's urban population projected to grow by three billion by 2050, sustainable development would be impossible without harnessing the potential of urbanization. At its twenty-fifth session, the Governing Council had adopted seven resolutions, including resolution 25/7 on governance reform, in which it decided to strengthen the oversight of UN-Habitat during inter-session periods by requesting the Committee of Permanent Representatives to establish a working group on programme and budget. Also among the resolutions adopted were resolution 25/1 on the contribution of UN-Habitat to the post-2015 development agenda, resolution 25/5 on support for the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) and the role of national Habitat committees in its preparation and implementation, and resolution 25/6 approving international guidelines on urban and territorial planning.

2. The Secretary-General's report (E/2015/72) provided a description of the activities undertaken by UN-Habitat in cooperation with other agencies and organizations of the United Nations system at the global, regional and national levels. In particular, the Programme had contributed to preparations for the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which should result in a global commitment to sustainable urbanization and human settlements development. She encouraged all Member States to participate actively in the preparatory process for that Conference. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat had also cooperated with United Nations system organizations and other partners in implementing a range of activities, including the "Delivering as one" initiative.

3. The report concluded with five recommendations, which she urged the Council to consider. They called on Member States to continue to give appropriate consideration to the role of urbanization in their discussions on the post-2015 agenda; to adopt integrated approaches engaging all key stakeholders and levels of subnational government with a view to innovative, sustainability-oriented solutions; to ensure the alignment of ideas on cities and human settlements across the ongoing consultations on major global issues; to establish or strengthen national urban policies and to apply the recently approved international guidelines on urban and territorial planning.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (continued)

(A/70/75-E/2015/55, A/70/92-E/2015/82 and A/70/92/Corr.1-E/2015/82/Corr.1)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/70/83-E/2015/75; E/2015/33)

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B, 60/265, 61/16, 67/290 and 68/1

4. **Ms. Verburg** (Netherlands), Chair of the Committee on World Food Security, introducing the report on the main decisions and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security (A/70/92-E/2015/82 and A/70/92/Corr.1-E/2015/82/Corr.1), urged the Council to endorse the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, which had been approved by the Committee at its forty-first session, and to ensure their wide dissemination to all relevant United Nations organizations and agencies. The Committee had also developed policy recommendations on food loss and waste in the context of sustainable food systems and on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition. The framework for action for food security and nutrition in protracted crises would be submitted for endorsement at the Committee's forty-second session.

5. In the context of discussions on the role that existing mechanisms might play in the review and follow-up of the proposed sustainable development goals, the Committee had been reflecting on its

effectiveness, with the aim of assessing the extent to which it promoted improved policy frameworks for rural and urban food security and nutrition at the global, regional and national levels. In that connection, it had undertaken an opinion survey, as a first step to developing a more comprehensive monitoring framework, which had indicated that it was on the right track, though more needed to be done. In the coming year, the Open-Ended Working Group on Monitoring would encourage volunteer member countries to pilot the implementation of in-depth country level assessments of the Committee's effectiveness. An external evaluation of the Committee was also planned for 2016.

6. **Mr. Acharya** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (Istanbul Programme of Action) (A/70/83-E/2015/75), said that the economies of the least developed countries had grown more slowly in 2014. Agriculture had continued to employ the largest proportion of the labour force. Labour productivity had remained low across all sectors, explaining to some extent the absence of any significant reduction in poverty rates. The outlook for 2015, while brighter, was clouded by uncertain prospects for the global economy, insecurity and political tensions, the prospect of adverse weather and climate conditions and, in certain West African countries, the threat of Ebola.

7. Progress on implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action had been mixed in all of the eight priority areas. Looking forward, priority should be given to productive capacity-building because it was critical for success in the other areas. Furthermore, it was necessary to improve the mobilization and allocation of means of implementation, including by improving the quantity, quality and effectiveness of official development assistance (ODA), strengthening South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in all areas and utilizing innovative financing. It was important to ensure that the sustainable development goals took into due account the issues critical to the least developed countries and that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development was fully implemented.

8. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the least developed countries, said that although they had regained some of the losses in economic growth experienced after the financial crisis, the economies of the least developed countries would decelerate for the second consecutive year, according to the recently published World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015: Update as of mid-2015. Despite substantial gains, many least developed countries were unlikely to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or the targets of the Istanbul Programme of Action in a timely manner. Unless the priorities and challenges of the least developed countries were made the central focus of the sustainable development goals, the post-2015 development agenda would not be achieved either in those countries or globally. There was a need for a seamless connection between the MDGs and the sustainable development goals, as well as for increased, targeted international support for the countries left behind.

9. While the progress in infrastructure development and other areas described in the Secretary-General's report (A/70/83-E/2015/75) was encouraging, further national and global efforts were needed to sustain and accelerate the pace of those improvements. The least developed countries also needed strong resilience-building in the area of agriculture, as well as financial and technical support to strengthen their capacity to increase government revenues. Moreover, the least developed countries were disadvantaged in terms of technological development, acquisition and transfer. With few exceptions they were reliant on primitive technologies that did not allow them to address the challenges faced in key priority areas of the Istanbul Programme of Action. In that regard, they awaited with interest the report of the high-level panel constituted to assess the feasibility of a technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism. The technology bank should be fully and effectively operationalized in 2017. The least developed countries were confident that their development partners would provide at least 0.1 per cent of their ODA for the effective functioning of that bank, and requested the United Nations Secretary-General to make arrangements for effective and timely realization of the panel's recommendations.

10. The least developed countries were deeply concerned at the sharp decline in ODA that had occurred in 2014, owing to cuts in the aid budgets of

development partners that had unevenly and unfairly affected those countries. By encouraging providers to allocate at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/gross national income to least developed countries and recognizing those that were allocating at least 50 per cent of their ODA to least developed countries, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda had set new development assistance benchmarks that must be met and followed up by the international community. In the area of exports, more progress was needed in granting duty-free and quota-free market access to the least developed countries. The Bali Package should be fully implemented and at least 50 per cent of aid for trade should be allocated to least developed countries.

11. The least developed countries requested the Secretariat to develop strategies for implementing the many specific measures, initiatives and mechanisms in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that were of vital importance to them, including the decision to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries. They requested a concrete road map for the operationalization of a one-stop arrangement, such as an international investment support centre, and requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures in that regard. The declaration adopted at the High-level Meeting on Global Partnerships for a Transformative Agenda for the Least Developed Countries, held in the context of the third United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, should be seen as an important toolkit for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the least developed countries.

12. The comprehensive high-level midterm review of the Istanbul Programme of Action to be held in June 2016 should launch concrete new initiatives and provide strong impetus for existing ones, building on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the sustainable development goals and the outcome of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, it should provide guidance for reviewing the least developed countries criteria.

13. The least developed countries called for enhanced contributions to the trust fund for monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and for further strengthening of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island

Developing States, in order for it to be able to fulfil its expanded mandate.

14. **Mr. De Lara Rangel** (Observer for Mexico) said that the post-2015 development agenda must recognize the need for assistance to the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries. As a provider of South-South cooperation and co-chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Mexico strongly supported the principles agreed at the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, namely ownership of development priorities by developing countries, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability of partners.

15. The President proposed that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/70/75-E/2015/55) and the report on the main decisions and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security (A/70/92-E/2015/82 and A/70/92/Corr.1-E/2015/82/Corr.1).

16. *It was so decided.*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/70/64 and A/70/76-E/2015/57; E/2015/65; E/2015/L.24)

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/70/82-E/2015/13; E/2015/L.22)

17. **Mr. Percaya** (Observer for Indonesia), speaking as Acting Chair of the Special Committee on Decolonization, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/70/64) and the report of the President of the Council on consultations with the Special Committee (E/2015/65). Only two organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the

World Food Programme, had contributed to the report of the President of the Council, by submitting information on their activities with regard to the implementation of the Declaration. He strongly urged other relevant United Nations system entities and international and regional organizations to do so in the future.

18. He expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for implementation of the decolonization agenda in seven Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean. At the regional seminar held in Managua, in May 2015, participating members of the Special Committee had stressed the need for the relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to engage with the work of the Special Committee and strengthen their efforts to provide assistance to the Territories, through the appropriate mechanisms. In that regard, he encouraged other United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to participate in the Special Committee's 2016 regional seminar in Fiji. The 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories faced numerous social, economic and environmental barriers to sustainable development which should be addressed comprehensively with the support of the international community and in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Draft resolution E/2015/L.24: Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations

19. **Mr. Percaya** (Observer for Indonesia), introducing the draft resolution, said that Indonesia and the Syrian Arab Republic had joined the sponsors.

20. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution, which had no programme budget implications.

21. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Colombia, Congo, France, Guatemala, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mauritius, Pakistan, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstained:

Albania, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Panama, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

22. *Draft resolution E/2015/L.24 was adopted by 19 votes to none, with 25 abstentions.**

23. **Ms. Derderian** (United States of America) said that, as in the past, her delegation had abstained from voting on the draft resolution because, while it agreed in principle that United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies could provide useful support to territories that were not members of the Organization so long as the domestic laws and policies of the territory's administering Power allowed such support, it was the responsibility of the administering Power to accept or reject such support and to determine its nature. Under the Constitution of the United States of America, the federal Government had sole responsibility for the conduct of the country's foreign relations, including those of its territories. Her delegation was concerned that the language of the draft resolution infringed upon the internal constitutional arrangements of the United States.

24. **Ms. Ravilova-Borovik** (Russian Federation) said that her Government had consistently championed the right of peoples to self-determination. However, in its view, consideration of that very political issue distracted the Council from its primary function of coordinating the socioeconomic work of the United Nations, and it had therefore abstained, as usual, from voting on the draft resolution.

25. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that his delegation had abstained, on the grounds that the resolution should be implemented in accordance with the relevant pronouncements of the United Nations and the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and Special Committee on specific territories.

* The delegation of China subsequently informed the Council that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution; and the delegation of France that it had intended to abstain.

26. **Mr. Alami** (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, introduced the note by the Secretary-General conveying a report by ESCWA on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/70/82-E/2015/13). The fierce offensive by Israel against Gaza in 2014 had wreaked unprecedented death and destruction, leaving thousands homeless and children psychologically damaged. Concerns over the possible commission of international crimes had prompted the establishment of an independent international commission of inquiry. The destruction of infrastructure and farm animals had exacerbated the environmental crisis, worsened food insecurity, deepened already rampant unemployment and further limited access to medical care. In addition, recovery was stymied by the ongoing eight-year blockade.

27. In the West Bank, Israel continued to segregate and discriminate against Palestinians, making them subject to a separate legal regime, revoking their residency permits to achieve "demographic balance", refusing to grant them building permits, banning them from certain roads and pursuing construction of the separation wall. Palestinians experienced forced displacement, discrimination in the allocation of water and restrictions on movement that denied them access to half of their agricultural lands. They were subject to arbitrary arrest and detention accompanied by ill treatment and torture. Government-sanctioned Israeli settlement was accelerating, and settlers continued to attack Palestinians, their property and their religious sites with impunity, while Israeli citizens and corporations illegally exploited their natural resources and polluted the environment. Not surprisingly, food insecurity and unemployment were high. Access to education was limited by restrictions on movement and, in Gaza, by the limited availability of schools. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Israel appropriated Arab lands, usurped natural resources, restricted building and enforced discriminatory water allocation. Until Israel ended its illegal occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territory and complied with international law, there could be no prospects for peace.

28. **Ms. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the Palestinians in Occupied Palestine lived in constant, mortal fear of the Israeli army and terrorist settlers. Israel aimed to control every aspect of their lives, collectively punishing, intimidating and dehumanizing them with impunity. One year after the Israeli offensive against Gaza, reconstruction lagged, psychological wounds festered, and hopes of progress were rapidly fading. The State of Palestine urgently appealed to the international community to act immediately to bring about a lifting of the blockade and, moreover, to continue to assist the Palestinian people to achieve their rights and legitimate national aspirations, in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Organization's responsibility in the question of Palestine.

29. The ESCWA report presented comprehensive facts and figures about the many serious economic and social repercussions of the 48-year occupation by Israel, including the eight-year blockade of Gaza, and documented persistent, ongoing Israeli violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. To address the root causes of de-development and the dire socioeconomic conditions in Occupied Palestine, Israel must end its occupation and recognize an independent State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders. Only then could the two peoples live side by side in peace.

Draft resolution E/2015/L.22: Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

30. **Mr. Marobc** (South Africa), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was based on the 2014 resolution, with updates to take into account the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in the occupied Syrian Golan, and issues emerging since the Council had last addressed the matter.

31. **The President** said that Turkey had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

32. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that the ESCWA report had shown once again that Israel had completely disregarded the hundreds of United Nations resolutions on the topic.

Israel had now placed the lives of Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan in unprecedented danger by supporting terrorist groups active in the area of separation in order to force them to abandon their homes or side with the terrorists against the Syrian Government. The world was well aware of that support, which had been amply documented in numerous United Nations documents, such as the reports of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, not to mention accounts in the Israeli media. The Israeli occupation authorities were providing logistical support, financing and food to such groups as the Nusrah Front, some of whose fighters had received treatment in Israeli hospitals. Israel had recently supported a series of terrorist attacks on the Syrian town of Hadar, in which dozens of innocent civilians had been killed. He urged ESCWA to mention that support, and its socioeconomic impact, in its 2016 report to the Council.

33. The ESCWA report conveyed to some extent the tragic situation in the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel was systematically displacing Syrian citizens, recruiting Nusrah Front terrorists to intimidate them and destroy their homes. It deprived Syrian farmers of water, which was made abundantly and affordably available to extremist settlers. It forced the Syrian inhabitants to use Israeli identity cards, and continued to impose its own laws in violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981). Without legal or moral justification, it had reimprisoned the Syrian Mandela, Sidqi al-Maqt, who had been freed in 2012 after 27 years behind bars. Extremist settlers had exploited and wasted natural resources, ruined farmland, uprooted trees and prevented Syrian farmers from selling their produce. Those and other racist policies were intended to force the Syrian inhabitants to leave or sever ties with their nation. Most recently, European and United States companies had been helping Israel explore for oil.

34. Palestinians and Syrians had suffered for decades under occupation because the so-called international community had failed to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its crimes. Whether in the occupied Syrian Golan or in the Syrian Arab Republic as a whole, the Syrian people needed immediate international action to confront Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups, not to mention the State terrorism practised by Israel in the occupied Syrian Golan. There

was consensus that the coming phase in international development should benefit all peoples of the world without exception. If the Palestinian people and the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan were to attain peace, stability and sustainable development, the Israeli occupation must first be brought to an immediate end, and those responsible for perpetrating or ignoring its crimes must be held to account.

35. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution, which had no programme budget implications.

36. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Albania, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, United States.

Abstained:

Honduras, Panama.

37. *Draft resolution E/2015/L.22 was adopted by 42 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.*

38. **Ms. Derderian** (United States of America) said that, as in previous years, the resolution was one-sided and failed to take a constructive approach that would advance the prospects of peace. The United States remained committed to supporting the Palestinian people in practical and effective ways. The United States was the largest bilateral donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and contributed significantly to other United Nations programmes providing assistance to the Palestinian people. It shared the concern of the international community over the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and would continue to work with the Palestinian Authority, Israel and international partners to improve the lives of civilians. Her Government remained committed to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle

East based on a two-State solution that established a viable, independent and contiguous State of Palestine living in peace and security alongside a secure, Jewish and democratic State of Israel. As a friend to both parties to the conflict, her country had no choice but to vote against the draft resolution.

39. **Ms. Carroll** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that the European Union wished to put on record that its member States considered the phrase "Palestinian Government" to refer to the Palestinian Authority and that, furthermore, the use of the term "Palestine" could not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and was without prejudice to the positions of the individual States members of the European Union on that issue and hence on the validity of the accession to the conventions and treaties mentioned in the resolution.

40. **Mr. Mikami** (Japan) said that Japan had voted in favour of the resolution, which urged both parties to take serious steps towards the resumption of negotiations. Recalling the many lives lost on both sides during the 2014 hostilities, he called on all parties and the international community to intensify efforts to prevent a recurrence.

41. **Ms. Meitzad** (Observer for Israel) said that the resolution and the report of which it took note conveniently ignored unwelcome truths. The terrorist Hamas regime continued to prepare for war and to indoctrinate the children and youth of Gaza, while the Palestinian Authority declined to exercise its responsibilities. With the international community dragging its feet and the Palestinian Authority unwilling or unable to assert authority in Gaza, it was Israel that ensured the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the residents. Furthermore, Israel treated injured Syrian civilians at its field hospital in Gaza as well as other hospitals in Israel, a fact about which the resolution was silent.

42. The obsession of ESCWA with Israel and its indifference to terrible human rights violations and bloodshed elsewhere in the region undermined the credibility of the entire institution. Its report neither presented the United Nations position accurately and nor captured the complexity of the situation on the ground. One-sided reports, resolutions and statements only served those who had no desire to engage in honest and meaningful direct dialogue. The resolution

did not enhance cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians or improve the lives of Palestinians; it simply perpetuated the status quo and had no place in the Council.

43. **The President** proposed that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/70/76-E/2015/57).

44. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.



Economic and Social Council

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Fourth coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 51st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 20 July 2015, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) (Republic of Korea)

Contents

Non-governmental organizations (*continued*)

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15-12208 (E)



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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Non-governmental organizations (continued)
(E/2015/32 (Part II); E/2015/L.21 and E/2015/L.25)

1. **Ms. Lucas** (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States; the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union had concerns about the functioning of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. It considered that the involvement of civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was an essential part of the work of the United Nations, including the Council, and it attached great importance to their contribution to open, strong and democratic societies. The open expression of a variety of views benefited everyone and helped the States Members of the United Nations to make more informed decisions on a range of issues, as had been explicitly affirmed by the Council in its resolution 1996/31, to which the European Union remained committed.
2. In recent years, there had been increasing deviations from the guiding principles of resolution 1996/31. It was regrettable that some members of the Committee continued to use delaying tactics to defer applications, including by asking repeated questions, some of which went beyond the information that NGOs were required to submit pursuant to resolution 1996/31. In 2014, the Committee had recommended granting consultative status to 383 NGOs and had deferred 345 applications; in 2015 it had recommended granting consultative status to only 284 NGOs and had deferred 376 applications. That practice left many NGOs in a state of prolonged limbo or permanent deferral. The Committee should live up to its responsibility to make decisions within a reasonable time frame.
3. Opposition to granting consultative status to NGOs was often based solely on the fact that those organizations were critical of certain countries' human rights records or held views that were different from those of their Governments. States would never agree with all the views expressed by NGOs, but the latter should still be given the opportunity to express their views at the United Nations in accordance with resolution 1996/31.
4. The application submitted by the organization Freedom Now had been pending for over five years, even though it had answered almost 60 questions posed to it. The European Union strongly believed that organizations that met the criteria laid down in resolution 1996/31 and had an established record of work in pursuing the goals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, should not be subject to procedural measures amounting to permanent deferral.
5. It was also a matter of concern that the withdrawal of consultative status was sometimes used as a form of reprisal for the activities of certain NGOs. The Council had set out clear criteria in resolution 1996/31, especially paragraphs 56 and 57 thereof, for any decisions on withdrawal of status. If those provisions were not followed, the Committee's decisions became arbitrary. Furthermore, such cases must be subject to free, fair and transparent discussion, allowing for a full assessment by all Committee members. As the withdrawal of consultative status was the most extreme course of action foreseen in resolution 1996/31, it could not be thoroughly assessed within a single Committee session. The European Union disagreed on principle with any attempt to use the Committee's procedures to undermine its very purpose.
6. The European Union recalled that the core mandate of the Committee was to determine whether an organization's activities fell within the Council's competence and whether its aims and purposes were in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter. The negative trend evident in the functioning of the Committee gave rise to concern that the guiding principles for granting consultative status were gradually being undermined. The arrangements for consultations with NGOs had not been designed to promote the interests of States, but to allow civil society actors to support and enrich the work of the United Nations by providing different perspectives. The European Union valued such contributions, even when they were critical, and thus urged the States members of the Committee to work together to defend and uphold the guiding principles agreed in resolution 1996/31.

7. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Observer for Mexico), also speaking on behalf of Chile and Uruguay, said that in today's globalized world, civil society played a crucial role in supporting and complementing the work of States in many spheres, addressing issues to which the former could not or would not pay attention. NGOs, through their relationship with the Council, had amply proven their usefulness and value added for the international community, supporting the ever broader agenda of the Organization and articulating the words and actions of civil society in all its diversity. The Committee's crucial function was thus to create and facilitate ways for those organizations to operate in the various fields where the United Nations was involved.
8. Regrettably, restrictions were being imposed on civil society and freedom of expression and assembly in various regions of the world. Reflecting those restrictions, civil society organizations were also encountering obstacles as they sought to participate in the work of the United Nations. Civil society had the potential to help achieve the goals of the United Nations, through contributions at both the national and multilateral levels. The Human Rights Council had recognized that potential, and had undertaken to help maintain, in both law and practice, an environment where civil society could operate free from threats and insecurity.
9. The procedures established by resolution 1996/31 were intended to be followed in a transparent, pluralistic and non-discriminatory fashion, in order to support the participation of NGOs in the work of the Organization. When deciding whether to grant consultative status to NGOs, the Committee should verify the independence and diversity of their personnel, and ensure that their objectives were in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter and contributed to the Council's work. However, that process was being undermined by certain practices, such as that of asking an NGO new questions each session, ultimately leading to endless postponement, which in practice constituted implicit refusal. The NGOs of developing countries frequently suffered in particular from cumbersome and dubious evaluation procedures that fell outside the real criteria for granting consultative status. It was of particular concern that such practices affected human rights NGOs to a major extent.
10. Pursuant to paragraph 57 of resolution 1996/31, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should never be used as a forum for politically-motivated questioning, punishment or reprisals for views expressed by NGOs in their areas of work. Greater transparency in meetings of the Committee, particularly through webcasts, would therefore be beneficial. It was likewise important to promote the effective, balanced and equitable participation of organizations from all regions and on all topics. The recent launch of *A Practical Guide to the UN Committee on NGOs*, prepared by a well-known NGO, was a concrete asset to help facilitate participation in a fair and effective manner.
11. **Ms. Viadati** (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that her Government attached great importance to the work of NGOs and the Committee, which paved the way for meaningful contributions by civil society to the Council's work, in accordance with resolution 1996/31.
12. As a member of the Committee, her delegation had been closely following the work of the Palestinian Return Centre, among others. After reading hundreds of pages of information regarding the work of this Centre in the United Kingdom, and elsewhere in Europe, Iran had concluded that the organization's aims fully complied with the Charter of the United Nations, resolution 1996/31 and international humanitarian law. It was a matter of concern that one delegation was seeking to misinform and mislead the Council and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations with regard to that organization. Attempts to undermine the Committee's decisions would create a dangerous precedent and slow the pace of civil society contributions as well. Her delegation hoped that the Council members would choose the right path by approving the Committee's recommendation that the Palestinian Return Centre should be granted consultative status.
- Draft decision E/2015/L.21: Application of the non-governmental organization Freedom Now for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*
13. **The President** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.
14. **Ms. Sison** (United States of America), introducing the draft decision on behalf of the sponsors listed in the document (E/2015/L.21), said that Estonia and Japan had joined the list of sponsors. The draft

decision sought to grant special consultative status to Freedom Now, a widely respected NGO that had undertaken important work to free prisoners of conscience who were behind bars in many cases simply for exercising their freedom of expression. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the honorary chair of the NGO, said that the organization was not only entitled to consultative status because it met the requirements, but also because it contributed to the mandate and mechanisms of the United Nations as envisioned in resolution 1996/31.

15. The application of Freedom Now had been pending for more than five years in the Committee, even though the organization had answered some 60 questions. The United States had pushed for action to put an end to unjust and inexcusable obstruction. The Council needed to act at the current meeting to break that unacceptable cycle. Her delegation hoped that the decision would be adopted by consensus; if a delegation called for a vote, however, she urged States to support Freedom Now by voting in favour of granting it consultative status.

16. **The President** said that Albania wished to join the list of sponsors.

17. **Mr. Hoxha** (Albania) said that under the Communist regime in Albania, the Constitution had stated that, although citizens enjoyed freedom of speech and a free press, such rights could not be exercised in opposition to the regime. In practice, draconian restrictions were imposed by the Government, ultimately rendering the word "freedom" devoid of all meaning. Propaganda against the State was criminalized and in some cases was punishable by death. In addition, individuals were imprisoned without trial if they were deemed to be a threat to the social system. As a consequence, tens of thousands of lives were destroyed, including through the incarceration of political prisoners and their families in labour camps. His delegation was recalling such dark times in order to make sure the Council understood what was at stake. Freedom Now clearly met the criteria for consultative status; the organization had also patiently waited for more than five years and actively sought the engagement of Committee members. The decision to grant Freedom Now consultative status was at the heart of the United Nations human rights mandate to support those who contributed to its work, often at great personal risk, as was the case with Freedom Now. As his country had paid a high price for freedom, it fully

supported Freedom Now in its efforts to improve respect for human rights and support for the rights of political prisoners. If the statements made, resolutions adopted and reports issued by the Organization and its Member States with regard to human rights had any real meaning, then Freedom Now should immediately be granted consultative status. It was the Council's duty to ensure that NGOs with established records were entitled to express their views at the United Nations. Albania would vote in favour of granting Freedom Now consultative status if the matter were put to a vote, and encouraged others to do likewise.

18. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on draft decision E/2015/L.21.

19. **Ms. Sison** (United States of America) said that she would like to know which delegation had requested a recorded vote.

20. **The President** said that the delegations of China, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and the Sudan had requested the recorded vote.

21. A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Australia, Austria, Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Congo, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Panama, Portugal, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sudan, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ghana, India, Kuwait, Mauritania, Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda.

22. *Draft decision E/2015/L.21 was adopted by 29 votes to 9, with 11 abstentions.**

* The delegation of the Congo subsequently informed the Council that it had intended to abstain.

Draft decision E/2015/L.25: Application of the non-governmental organization Palestinian Return Centre for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

23. **The President** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.
24. **Mr. Roet** (Observer for Israel), introducing draft decision E/2015/L.25, said that Australia, Canada and the United States had joined the list of sponsors. Israel greatly appreciated the work of civil society and deemed the involvement of NGOs to be crucial for the protection of human rights and sustainable development. It had supported the granting of consultative status to many worthy NGOs. Regrettably, however, the Committee's work had become more political, and it had sometimes forgotten its responsibility to prevent organizations from gaining access to the United Nations if their principles contradicted those contained in the Charter. Despite the fact that Israel and other Member States had brought grave concerns and questions before the Committee, certain members had decided to ignore the common practice of raising questions to deliberate on an application. This had compelled Israel to submit the draft decision not to grant consultative status to the Palestinian Return Centre.
25. The Palestinian Return Centre was not what it claimed. Not only was it affiliated with Hamas, a recognized terrorist organization responsible for the deaths of countless Israeli civilians, but it was an essential part of its network in Europe. National intelligence agencies, world media sources and independent research centres had all cited numerous connections between the Centre and Hamas. The Centre recruited and radicalized individuals throughout Europe and openly called for the annihilation of the State of Israel. In its application, it was clear that the organization was financed by well-known terrorist funding sources such as Interpal and Comité de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Palestiniens. The denial of terrorist affiliations was deceitful, as a Hamas leader had called the head of the Palestinian Return Centre to congratulate the organization on obtaining consultative status at the United Nations. Although the conversation had subsequently been denied, his delegation had preserved a screenshot proving its existence.
26. His delegation urged the Council not grant to consultative status to the Palestinian Return Centre, as the organization openly promoted terrorism and thus did not comply with Council resolution 1996/31 and the Charter of the United Nations. The activities of the Palestinian Return Centre clearly violated the first stated purpose of the United Nations, namely, to maintain international peace and security. A decision to grant the Centre consultative status would set a precedent and pave the way for other terror-affiliated organizations to gain access to the United Nations system. Member States had the opportunity to stop a dangerous trend by sending a clear message to terrorist organizations around the world. If the Palestinian Return Centre were to be granted consultative status, the international community should not be surprised if Jabhat al-Nusra, Al-Qaida and ISIS also applied for consultative status in the future, as Hamas would provide them with a roadmap for access to the United Nations behind the façade of a human rights or development organization. His delegation called on all Council members to adopt the draft decision by consensus in order to protect the United Nations. If a recorded vote were to be called, his delegation urged States to support the draft decision, thereby making the right moral choice and defending the Organization's values.
27. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on draft decision E/2015/L.25.
28. **Ms. Sison** (United States), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that her delegation had voted in the Committee against granting consultative status to the Palestinian Return Centre because of serious and lingering concerns about its background and activities. The organization's application had only been under consideration for one year when some delegations had pushed prematurely for action. As a result, questions had not been sufficiently addressed, especially regarding the Centre's work with organizations in Syria and Lebanon.
29. The United States strongly supported the voices of civil society at the United Nations, as it had shown by supporting numerous NGOs, even when it disagreed with their policies. Her delegation could not, however, support accreditation for the Palestinian Return Centre, owing to outstanding legitimate questions about its activities and leadership which must be addressed before consultative status could be granted. Her delegation would vote in favour of the decision not to grant special consultative status to the Palestinian Return Centre.
30. **Ms. Hullman** (Germany), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that

although Germany was not a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, her delegation had followed the case very closely. Important questions about the work and leadership of the Palestinian Return Centre remained unanswered and had been cut short by a vote. Further discussions and consultations were necessary. Although her delegation was generally a staunch supporter of participation by NGOs and civil society in the work of the United Nations, and had backed the accreditation of countless other organizations, it could not vote in favour of granting consultative status to the Palestinian Return Centre; nor could it abstain from voting.

31. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Albania, Australia, Austria, Botswana, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against:

Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, China, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Pakistan, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Benin, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Congo, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Japan, Nepal, Panama, Portugal, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Uganda.

32. *Draft decision E/2015/L.25 was rejected by 16 votes to 13, with 18 abstentions.*

33. **Mr. Shearman** (United Kingdom) said that the involvement of civil society and NGOs was an essential part of the work of the United Nations, including the Council. His delegation attached great importance to their contribution in building strong, open and democratic societies, and remained committed to the principles set out in Council resolution 1996/31. However, in the case of the Palestinian Return Centre, serious questions had been raised as to whether the aims, principles and activities of the organization were compatible with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, pursuant to resolution 1996/31. Consequently, his delegation had voted in support of the draft decision submitted by Israel to oppose the granting of special consultative status to the Palestinian Return Centre at the present time.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2015 resumed session (E/2015/32 (Part II))

Draft decision I: Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations

34. **The President** invited the Council to take action on draft decision I entitled "Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations", as amended by the adoption of draft decision E/2015/L.21.

35. *Draft decision I, as amended, was adopted.*

36. **The President** invited the Council to take action on seven draft decisions recommended by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which were contained in chapter I of its report (E/2015/32 (Part II)).

Draft decision II: Withdrawal of consultative status of the non-governmental organization African Technical Association

Draft decision III: Withdrawal of consultative status of the non-governmental organization African Technology Development Link

Draft decision IV: Suspension of consultative status of non-governmental organizations with outstanding quadrennial reports, pursuant to Council resolution 2008/4

Draft decision V: Reinstatement of consultative status of non-governmental organizations that submitted outstanding quadrennial reports, pursuant to Council resolution 2008/4

Draft decision VI: Withdrawal of consultative status of non-governmental organizations in accordance with Council resolution 2008/4

Draft decision VII: Dates and provisional agenda of the 2016 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

Draft decision VIII: Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2015 resumed session

37. *Draft decisions II, II, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII were adopted.*

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.